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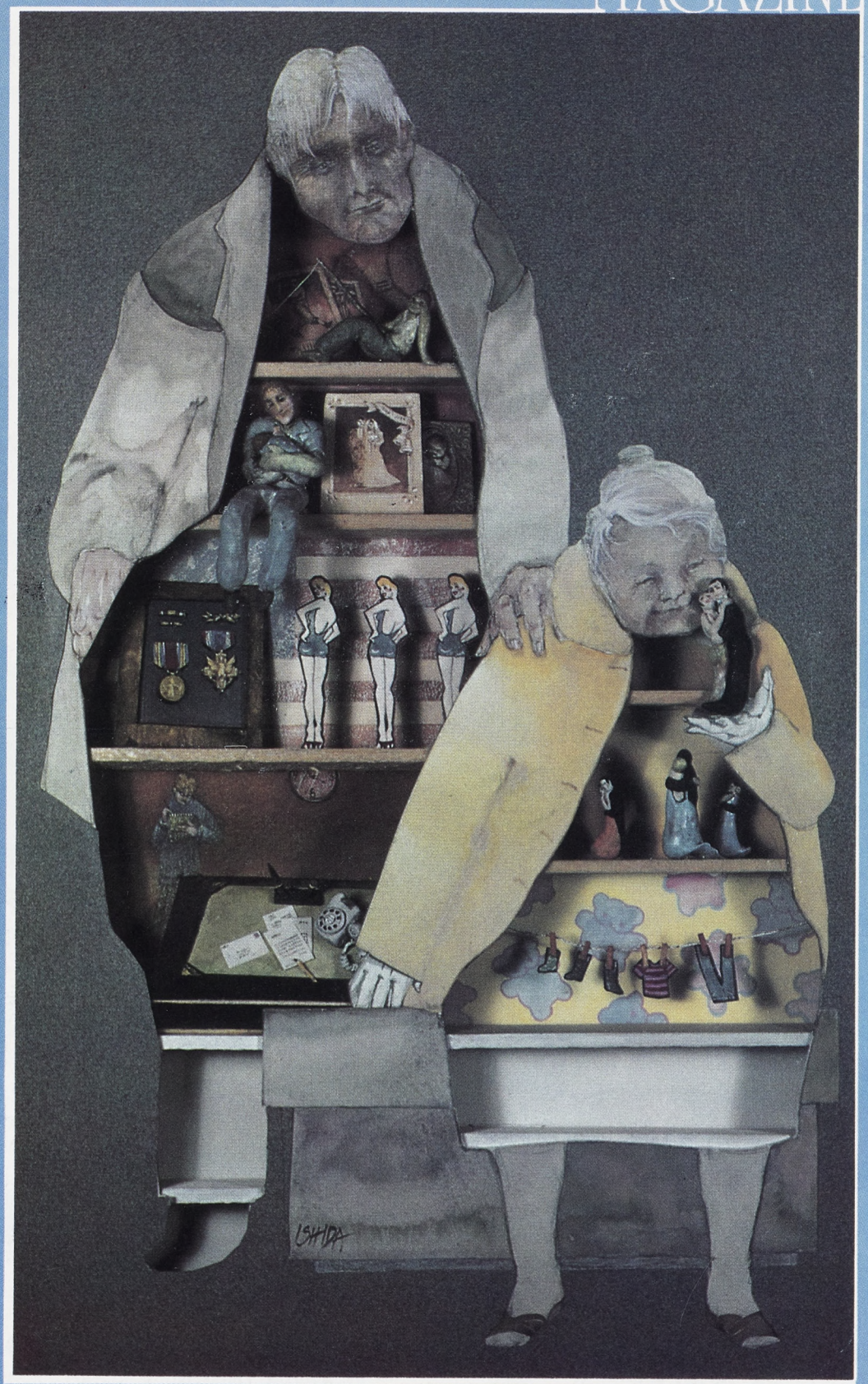

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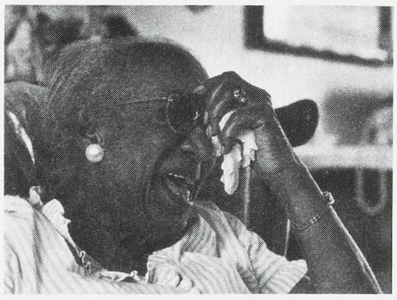

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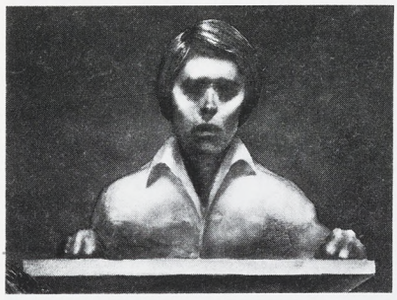


25

Huntington Harbour 4
By Dan Post

P.O. Box L-O-V-E 9
By Timarie A. Lawrence

Mt. Wilson's Modern Galileos 12
By Sam Romero

"Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" 16
By Linda Leisner, Gerald Miller, and Debbie Stanley

Read It and Weep 25
By Jon Tilley

Let's Liberate the Lean 28
Humor by Carol Carlsen

A Pretty How Town 30
Fiction by Adrienne Byers

The Gothic Passion 40
By Teresa Philbin

To Margaritaville 43
By Bill Campa
Photos by Joan Monroe

A Note from the Editor—

I smile when looks of horror cross the faces of those who learn that they've sprouted a gray hair. That single miniscule hair seems to symbolize to them a dreadful process--growing older. Too often, we falsely equate old age with being wrinkled, senile and tuckered out. In this issue of *The University Magazine,* we mean to change any such stereotypes you may hold of the elderly. An article by staff writers Linda Leisner, Gerald Miller and Debbie Stanley provides an upbeat peek into the world of active and productive senior citizens.

We explore many other ''worlds'' here in our spring issue: Timarie Lawrence goes on a love-safari through the sometimes-hellish adventureland of the classified ads; Jon Tilley gets his moment in the spotlight at a local poetry reading and brings us along; Dan Post takes us inside the Huntington Harbour high-status game (where the ante is unbelievably high); and just in time for summer, Bill Campa gives some practical tips for an enjoyable Ensenada holiday, with accompanying photographs by Joan Monroe.

If you aren't in some way intrigued, touched, entertained or informed, we haven't done our job. But we're sure you'll find the opposite is true, that this is one of our finest issues ever. Read away!

Dave Jessup

Cover illustration by Susan Ishida

The University Magazine Logo designed by Dan Post

HUNTINGTON

Look behind

By Dan Post

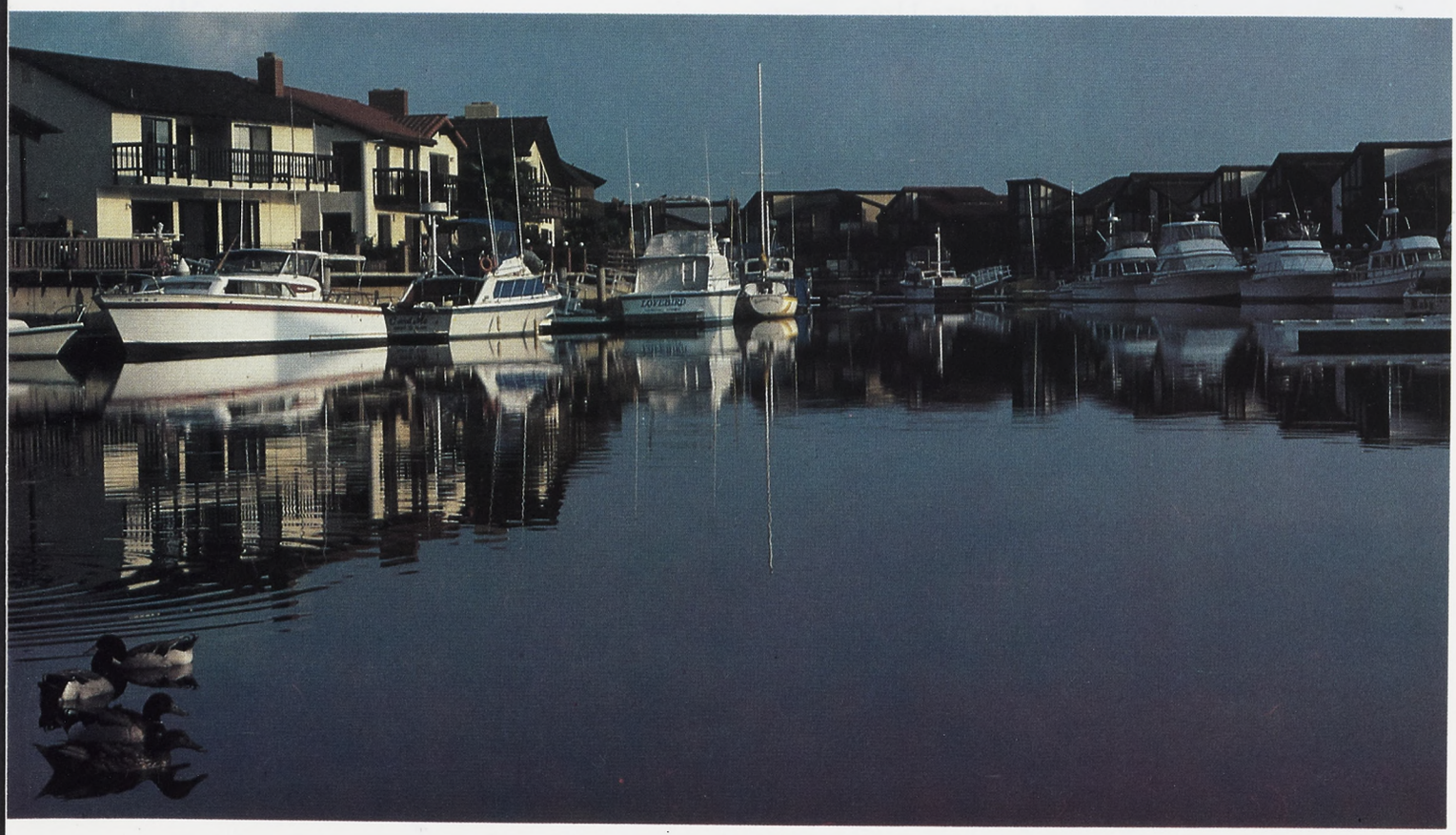
In a desperate bid for attention, the young man let out a nervous cough. Twenty minutes of subtle off-key whistling only brought irritated glances from passing staff members.

After waiting nearly an hour at a Huntington Harbour realty agency for someone to acknowledge his presence, the young man was approached by a middle-aged man in a dark wool suit. ''Yes?'' he inquired stoically. When the visitor told him he wanted information about the area, the realtor pointed dramatically to a pile of colorful sales propaganda the guest had already scanned a dozen times. ''Why don't you come back some other time?'' the realtor asked, gliding a comb through his shiny gray hair. ''There's really no one here to help you right now.'' The eyes below the Vitalis sheen glared disapprovingly at the young man's gym shorts and weathered tee-shirt as he turned to exit.

The young man realized he'd given more attention to comfort than to the aesthetics of his appearance. He felt the realtor grimace as his Toyota door made a tinny sound slamming shut. Obviously a new calling card was in order.

Several days later, after a taxing bout with the blow drier, the same young man buttoned up a tweed jacket over a beer stain on his tie and slipped into a Porsche borrowed from a very reluctant neighbor. Following a mildly ostentatious drive down PCH, he moored the car conspicuously in front of Huntington Harbour Realty and strutted confidently through the foyer.

Manicured bodies slithered from partitioned cubicles toward him like sharks lured by fresh blood. Before he could give his name to the receptionist, the formerly unobliging



HARBOUR

the Gatsby glitter

salesman flashed a pearly grin. He winced involuntarily as the realtor solicited his pocketed hand for a shake.

Within minutes his chic new image had done the trick. Photographs, maps, newsletters, market listings and elaborate sales literature came flying his way. It took some fast talking to get back out the door. ''Please let us know if there's anything at all we can do for you—call anytime,'' urged the receptionist.

Hastily, he sought refuge in the Porsche. As he reached to close the car's door, a solemn man in a white captain's hat ran his tanned hand appreciatively over the front fender. ''I hear these are pretty nice machines, you happy with it?''

''Yeah, sure,'' he responded meekly.

''I'll bet you can't wait to get a newer one,'' the man said flatly, turning away before he could reply.

With a touch of tongue-in-cheek nouveau riche humor, one Harbour resident displays the epitome of understatement. Where? Why, on his Rolls Royce plates in the castle driveway, of course.

An old saying among real estate agents lists the three most important aspects of property as location, location and location. Few deny that the most coveted land in the world is either on or near the water.

Huntington Harbour is the perfect example. Whether waterfront or waterview, island or mainland, one-story or multiple level, Huntington Harbour homes span a prodigious range of architectural styles from traditional to contemporary to experimental, and each costs a minor fortune. Resting on a controversial man-made foundation, the exclusive community is widely recognized for its collective opulence.

Correspondingly, its residents, with their passion for active living and social advancement, make up a colorful and disparate lot that has aroused the curiosity of professional and amateur sociologists alike. For instance, some observers feel that the evolution of the area into an elitist's playground has trapped many of the original middle-class inhabitants. ''The intense economic competitiveness among residents is one of the reasons our business survives in these inflationary times,'' admits a Long Beach yacht broker who satisfies the local skippers' love of Cabo San Lucas.

In classic examples of attempting to keep up with the Vanderbilts next door, news of a longer boat or faster car can send carefully budgeted families scurrying for more credit. ''A majority of the area's homeowners carry the burden of a

Editor
Dave Jessup

Managing Editor
Sandra Kent

Associate Editors
Darcie Furfaro
Teresa Philbin

Art Director
Dan Post

Assistant Art Director
Jana C. Whitney

Advertising Sales Manager
Maggie Heise

Faculty Advisor
Larry L. Meyer

The University Magazine Staff

Yvonne Andreos, Rose Arrieta, Adrienne Byers, Bill Campa, Carol Carlsen, Madeleine Cazian, David Churchill, Nancy Dugan, Randi Firus, Phyllis Ioffrida, Jeffrey Laham, Timarie Lawrence, Linda Leisner, Garson Lipow, Lacey Logan, Marianne McCann, Gerald Miller, Joan Monroe, Timothy Nunn, Janice Parker, Suzanne Paulino, Nancy Piccione, Robin Richesson, Sam Romero, Debbie Stanley, Colleen Straton, Randy Sueda, Jon Tilley, Debra Wilson, Matthew Winiarski, Wendy Wrisley

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second mortgage just to finance their recreational activities,'' reveals a president of a local savings and loan facility. Jordan Locke, a one- time resident and respected financial advisor, agrees: ''There are some very apparent differences in the true economic capabilities of the families.''

The competition even filters down to the area's young. Peers whose parents lacked the insight to clothe them in La Coste or Calvin Klein are often shunned by their classmates at Marina High School for their deficient garb. ''Appropriate fashion is one of the keys to status and respect,'' says a first year coach. ''It seems like everyone is label- conscious. I heard a loud argument in the locker room the other day when one kid prodded another about having imitation topsider shoes. It turned out the shoes were the real thing, but he lost face when his sunglasses were exposed as a poor facsimile of French Vuarnets.''

The explosive appreciation of property values coupled with the growing scarcity of waterfront space points up visible contrasts between the upwardly-mobile family man who bought into the development fifteen years ago at under $50,000 and the surgeon who paid over $1 million for a neighboring home last year. But an entertainer's lavish plans for a custom residence expected to triple that figure leaves both their mouths ajar. ''The damn property taxes are going to force me out ot the area,'' complains a waterfront resident of sixteen years.

After five years of Seattle's frequent rains, Tom Yorath's family relished the prospect of waterfront living on what many call the California Riviera. In March, 1970, Yorath purchased a new five- bedroom, 3,300-square-foot house on Humboldt Island for $89,900. A decade later, the same house was appraised at close to $800,000. ''We experienced a thirty to forty percent increase in 1976 alone,'' observes Tony Hebling of Huntington Harbour Realty, which has posted new home sales in excess of $1 billion in the course of two decades.

''I just wanted a decent place to raise my family,'' Yorath says. ''No one could rightfully call me a speculator.'' Most of his original neighbors were young, trying to build secure futures in the nation's fastest growing region. But Yorath saw lots of changes in the last decade, and not just in the water quality of the community's channels. ''For awhile, doctors did most of the buying. Now the lawyers seem to be taking over. Perhaps they ultimately own the doctors,'' he theorizes.

Otto Strehlow, former sales manager of Huntington Harbour Realty, says that less than five years ago, the ''typical'' buyers were married couples in their mid-40's with two or three children. Family-oriented and school district- conscious, they kept active through boating and tennis, and had a concern for the community's social opportunities.

Many of Strehlow's buyers came out of the San Gabriel basin, from such established residential communities as San Marino and Arcadia. Well-educated and from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds, these people were running from smog. More recently, the area's new residents move from West Los Angeles, Bel Air and Brentwood areas. These buyers are almost always exceedingly wealthly professional people or executives of large corporations.

''The degree of social sophistication seems higher now,'' adds a Century 21 salesman. ''Buyers are suddenly of a prohibitively discerning nature.'' For instance, each of the five single-family homes comprising Piedmont Cove on the main channel carries a price tag of $1.9 million. The structures resemble the famous

style of architect Mies Van der Rohe. Each home boasts a private slip capable of accommodating a 75-foot yacht. Other small conveniences include integrated solar energy systems, household computers, temperature-controlled wine cellars, indoor-outdoor spas and $100,000 stainless steel stairways.

The Southern California waterfront lifestyle provides a fascinating study for Van Shaw, a professor of Sociology at Colorado College and a specialist in enthnographic studies. He sees a unique assembly of values when a cross section of people commits itself to material acquisition. ''Male peacocks strut their feathers in a similar fashion,'' he says, ''but obviously for different reasons. Actually, most residential areas in America display comparable tendencies. The price of the props is the only variable.''

One young resident delighted in telling of a wealthy local land developer dedicated to showmanship. His wife presented him with a Betamax last Christmas, but the unit apparently lacked several of the features he'd hoped for in a video system. He impulsively loaded the unit on his 48-foot sportfisher and cruised to a conspicuous spot in the Harbour where he heaved it overboard. ''It seems people here like to show that money doesn't matter to them even though it's obvious that it does,'' says Brian Hirakami, a fifth-year checker at an area supermarket.

The egg for this hybrid village was fertilized more than twenty years ago when two young men, Peter Douglas and Martin Fenton—visitors to the Newport area from Colorado—found what Fenton called a ''barren expanse of desolate, virtually uninhabitable marshland'' just past the Huntington Beach oil fields. Observing a real estate market still in its infancy, the two initiated a course of action for acquisition of the Lomita Gun Club's 878 acres.

So as early as 1959, plans had been laid for a Venice-like community with a 258-acre network of channels and turning basins. The pair's hired firm of William Pereira and Associates, also envisioned five man-made islands, aesthetic lagoons, and small-scale beaches dotting the 400-foot- wide main channel leading to the sea.

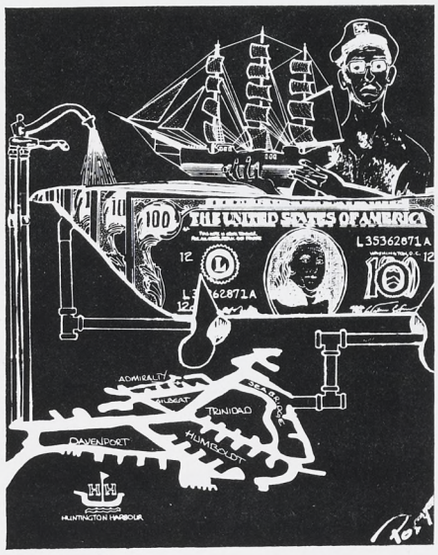
The project did not go forward without a hitch, however. Area biologists violently opposed the unnatural dredging and filling necessary to establish the project. Ecologists considered the wetlands a vital link to Anaheim Bay. ''That marsh served as a purification stage for fresh water reaching the sea and as a feeding ground for an infinite variety of animals,'' says James Scott, formerly involved in a Cal Tech research project on the area. ''Without that essential sieve and enrichment stage, the innate fertility and efficiency of the whole system is prostituted.''

A number of prominent naturalists agree that the equilibrium of natural coastal processes has been sacrificed. Noted environmentalist Anne W. Simon paints a disturbing picture: ''The coast is informing us that there is a saturation point beyond which its natural functions no longer flourish, often diminish, or simply cease.''

She says engineers must recognize the role of wetlands as sponges to absorb destructive floodwaters. She is shocked that they even continue to build below sea level and believes disaster lies ahead.

Expensive dikes, levees, channels and seawalls, for all their engineering and expense, fail to provide protection that is as effective as the shock absorbing marshland,'' she contends.

Long-time resident of Seal Beach Kent Bosart has idyllic memories of the region. ''In the late fifties, the Rancho Lomita Marsh was full of animals—every kind. There aren't



too many frontiers left around here. All my life I've seen affluence override common sense.''

The Pereira firm's plans hinged on completion of complicated and unproven hydrological work, but by late spring of 1962, most technological problems were solved and the five islands were geographically defined. Early that same summer, with bulldozers still in evidence, the first sites of Admiralty Island went up for sale to an eager public. Soon an adjoining island— Gilbert—got similar treatment.

Huntington Harbour matured into the Seventies with the development of Davenport, Humboldt and Trinidad Islands. Several exploratory projects were begun, including Tennis Estates, the Sea Gate and Seabridge condominiums. ''We were attempting to balance the traditional housing with alternative theme projects attached to the primary offering,'' Fenton says somewhat defensively. Maximum use was made of the available square footage; new projects, in marked contrast to the exclusively single-level earlier structures, went up much closer together and in multiple stories.

To maximize sales through more efficient land usage, such controversial concepts as congregate

(Continued on page 38)

MAIL
Pat Switzer
875 S. LASSEN RD
LA PUENTE, CA.

P.O. Box L-O-V-E

Yng attr F seeks prfct M thru clssfd ads

By Timarie A. Lawrence

''How should I start this? Dear Ms. Box A-748, or how about Dear Friend? I must start off by saying that I have never answered a personal ad in a newspaper. I was sitting at work today during lunch, going through the ''For sale'' ads, when your little ad caught my eye. For some reason it touched me, so I decided to write to you.''

I read the personal ads often. I'd always wondered what kinds of people sought romance and ''sincere relationships'' through these ads. This spring my curiosity finally won out and I satisfied it by actually placing an ad myself. It read , ''Yng Attr F seeks sincere M. Box A-748, IPT Class. Dept 604 Pine, LB 90844. Incl. photo.''

The ad ran twelve days and drew 75 responses from men ranging in age from twenty to 63 years. Only five typed their letters. Not everyone included a picture, and among those I received were Polaroid shots and photos on expired driver's licenses and employment i.d.'s. A few admitted their pictures were out-of-date; some requested the return of their pictures if I wasn't interested.

I read the letters and sorted them into two piles—''no's'' and ''maybe/yes's.'' If the man couldn't spell and used poor grammar, I dumped his letter on the ''forget it'' pile. Mention of marriage or sex, whether implicit or explicit, also earned a quick rejection.

For example, one man, who looked about thirty judging from the four mugshots he seemed to have taken in a machine at Woolworth's, described his idea of a *''nice evening, a getting-acquainted evening,''* as consisting of *''spending some daytime hours getting to know one another. Early evening brings on a quiet dinner for two, some soft music and wine, fine food, and pleasant conversation flavored with romantic interludes. After dinner (we would take) a drive along the coast in my sports car listening to some good music, enjoying the air and the stars. Romance may follow, but* never *must be forced!''* And if that wasn't enough to put me off, he went on to tell me how good looking he was—a grossly unrealistic perception—and that he was a great lover. Sorry, pal.

A few men told me right off that they were sterile and free from venereal disease. I guess that they wanted to put me at ease from the beginning. One forty-year-old man wrote in his second paragraph that he was ''very veril and steril (sic).'' In the third paragraph he let me know that if I was bisexual that was O.K.; if I was straight that was O.K., too. He was *not* O.K. with me.

If a respondent's picture was rather plain (I received only one extremely attractive picture), but the man sounded genuinely nice, he went into the ''maybe—yes'' pile. I accepted letters which had a few spelling and grammatical errors, but included a fairly good-looking picture. Conversely, if a letter sounded sincere but the man looked offensive, I buried it in the reject stack. Hastily written notes and picture-only responses I also scrapped.

After sorting them all, the ''forget it'' stack towered over the ''maybe/yes'' one; I ended up with sixty rejects and fifteen prospects.

To get a true sampling of respondents, I knew, meant I would have to meet mashers as well as the safe-sounding men. Frankly I wasn't up to it, so only a few men on my prospect list—five in all—received a call. I suppose I'm not a very objective researcher; I value my life too dearly.

I actually answered an ad before placing mine. Through it, I met exactly the kind of man I anticipated meeting through a personal ad. Steve (a ficticious name) ran his ad in the *Daily Forty-Niner* and the *Independent, Press-Telegram*. It read, ''Handsome teacher, 29, wealthy, seeks sincere slender woman. 437-0211.'' I even saw his printed flyers posted on campus. Large black letters on the flyer asked, ''Are you an unmarried woman?'' Below in smaller letters it read, ''Would you like to meet this unmarried man?'' An arrow pointed to his picture. He stated his interests, that he was sick of the bar scene, and that he found the flyer to be a creative way of meeting a sincere woman.

His was my first phone call, and I was anxious when I made it, so with

Illustration by Ken Corral

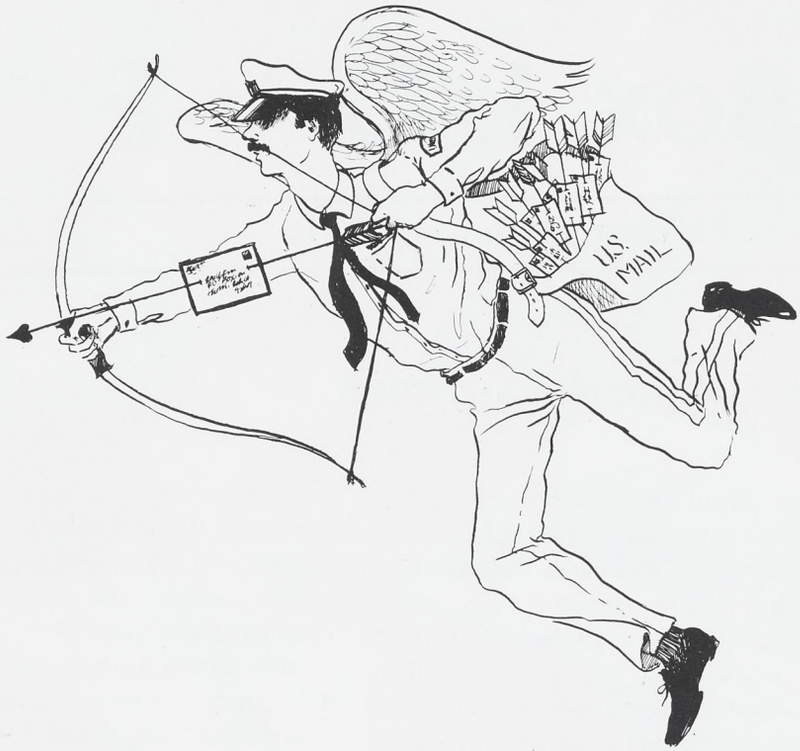


Illustration byRobin Richesson

a cup of tea and my sister close-by for moral support, I dialed the number.

"Hello?" A calm voice answered.

"Hello," I said. "Are you the handsome teacher?"

The conversation felt like an interview. He fired questions as though he used a standard list for each caller. He wanted to know my age, interests, occupation, height, and weight. The only personal information he shared with me concerned how much property he owned and how much money he was worth. I listened, unimpressed, especially by the amount he thought worth bragging about. Our conversation lasted just a few minutes, but I learned later that it earned me a "star rating." According to the very discriminating Steve, only nine of his sixty callers had received stars.

During the next few weeks we missed each other's calls, leaving messages. But interestingly, I received one of his flyers in response to the ad that *I* ran. He'd scribbled an unimpressive note on the back of the flyer. Normally, Steve's note would have gone directly to the reject pile. But I'd already contacted him, and I still wanted a real flesh-and-blood introduction to this strange social netherworld.

When I told him that the ad he had answered was mine, he lost his position of power and we were equals. I learned, too, that his two ads and the flyer I'd seen were only the tip of the iceberg; he'd placed his ad in a total of twelve newspapers—ten college and two local—and sent his flyer to about 200 businesses to be distributed and posted!

We met Saturday morning at eleven o'clock in a Bob's Big Boy. He looked nothing like the flyer's small, blurry photo, which turned out to be a very good picture of Steve.

I couldn't understand why such a "wealthy" man wore scuffed, round-toed shoes that were ten years out of style. His brown vinyl leather-look jacket, well-worn at the collar and cuffs, matched his jute-and-plastic belt perfectly. These clothes on his skinny body made him look like a boy struggling through puberty and his awkward years.

I discovered Steve's problem. He was repulsive. He tried to make me feel as though I had to measure up to some standard set by him. With visions of self-grandeur, he went on about how great he was and tried to persuade me, too. He convinced me only that he was a presumptuous, repulsive bore. The end of our agreed-upon one-hour meeting came about 55 minutes too late for me.

A letter arrived from a man, age 37, who had the most artistic handwriting I'd ever seen. His letter, with its grammatical errors, made me think English was his second language. He included no picture, home address, or phone number. Rather, he gave me a post office box number and his work phone number.

These warnings should have directed his letter to the no-contact pile, but it was temptingly pretty and pleasant. He wrote, *"Hi there. Perhaps you won't mind me dropping this short and unexpected letter, would you? Hope not. Though we are total strangers to one another somehow I feel that I know you already, kind, good-looking, and very loving."*

I began the telephone conversation with the usual ice-breaker: "You don't know me but I received a letter from you." When I asked why he had answered the ad, he said it was because he liked me. I told him that he didn't even know me, but he insisted that he liked me. He wanted to meet the following day during his lunch break from work.

"We could meet at one of those fast-food places, or we could meet in my car or in your car," he said. I felt wonderfully in control of our talk, knowing that I was about to hang up on him at any second. Promising to call him the following afternoon to arrange a meeting, I said goodbye. He asked me to give him a kiss; the only smack he got was the sound of the receiver hitting its cradle.

Another letter intrigued me so much that I had to call its sender. The letter included the largest grouping of obscure words I'd seen since the standardized tests in high school. The man had misspelled a few words and he didn't use any punctuation to speak of, but most of the words were used correctly. Refreshingly, the letter didn't start with the usual 'Dear Yng attr F.'' Instead, it began: *''Dear genteel mailbasket lady, classified crystal gazer and/or dead-letter office woman of resources...''*

I wanted to know if the man had a flaky sense of humor or if he was off his rocker. As it turned out, he was mentally ill. Truly. He collected Social Security benefits, never worked, and spent his days wandering the streets. He once fasted 44 days, which he considered one of his greatest accomplishments. Over the phone, I humored this deranged 23-year-old, saying I would be in touch with him. But I doubted anyone could ever be ''in touch'' with him.

Pete (a fictitious name) sent a witty, neatly printed, informative, and sincere letter. In the picture he was dressed in a three-piece suit, had short reddish hair, a well-trimmed beard and moustache, and a laughing smile.

''Dear Ms.,'' he began. *''It is unusual to see an advertisement so quiet and modest. That is the primary reason I am answering...I have no doubt that you are at the very least a 'Yng attr f.'' Everyone likes alphabet soup! My only preferences towards the female gender (sic) are honesty, some degree of self-esteem, and a genuine interest in other people. If you are able to communicate with me, I definitely wish to meet you.''*

The phone calls always embarrassed me at first. Pete did most of the talking, telling me about his hobbies and his job as a machinist. He talked my ear off. Finally, I got off the phone with a promise to call him in a day or two. Wednesday, the second evening, I called him. When I asked how he was he said, ''Fine now that you called.'' He'd probably been sitting by the phone for two nights, waiting.

We planned to meet Sunday afternoon at a restaurant near the beach. Pete said I would easily recognize him because he would be riding a motorcycle. I drove into the parking lot under the rain-threatening skies, and saw a man waiting outside the door. I wasn't sure if it was Pete or not. No motorcycle could be seen, but the man resembled the picture.

I use the term *resemble* very lightly. His wavy red hair had grown to the middle of his neck. He wore Levis, a flannel shirt, ragged clunky boots, and a black leather jacket. His glasses provided the only positive identification.

I almost circled and drove right back home. Instead, I parked. We exchanged names and made small talk. Pete asked me if I wanted to take a walk. Since I knew people in the area and it was still light, I agreed hesitantly. Mainly, he talked and I listened, feigning laughter at his borderline-funny jokes. After a long half hour of walking, I corraled him back into the restaurant.

Craftily ordering only Sanka—combined with the luck of getting a slow waitress—I was able to leave while he was still eating. He asked for my phone number and I didn't know how to decline, so I gave it to him.

Pete was a nice person, but Pete was a biker. After speaking with him three times, I'd grown completely bored. He also had scummy teeth; I can't tolerate that. He keeps calling and I haven't yet thought of a gentle way to get rid of him; maybe I'll write a letter of rejection. No masher, Mr. Biker, but no Mr. Wonderful either. Pete's trouble was that he was lonely.

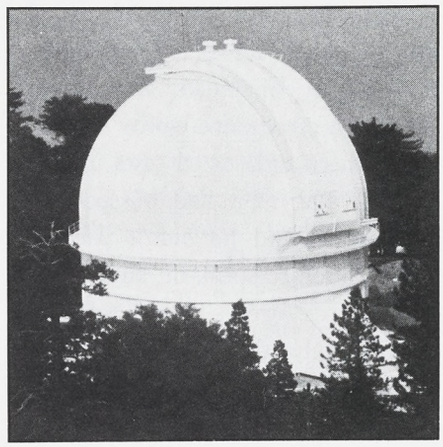
Jerry (a fictitious name) was the only extremely good-looking man who answered my ad. His letter listed his interests and shared some of his weaknesses: *''I'm six feet tall and weigh 175 pounds, about 10 pounds overweight (but who isn't?)...I think of myself as kind of a quiet person, maybe a little introverted, intelligent, sensible, and easy to get along with. Well, that's me! I'm looking for a sincere relationship with someone also. I hope I come close to what you're looking for. I really would like to at least meet you. Please write or call me, or even stop by if you want.* Sincerely, *Jerry.''*

When I called he let me know right away that he was embarrassed. As usual, I was too. We met a few days later at the same restaurant where I had met Pete. Jerry stood outside waiting when I arrived. He looked exactly like his picture, with dark brown hair and moustache which accentuated smooth, friendly brown eyes. He opened the door for me and we sat across from each other at a corner table.

(Continued on page 39.)

I haven't thought of a gentle way to get rid of him; maybe I'll write a letter of rejection.

Mount Wilson's Modern Galileos



By Sam Romero

On clear nights when the glories of the heavens gleam in sharp relief to the dark sky, explorers peer from domed buildings set on quiet mountains, away from the bright city lights. From these lofty places astronomers watch gliding orbs, hoping and working to solve elusive mysteries.

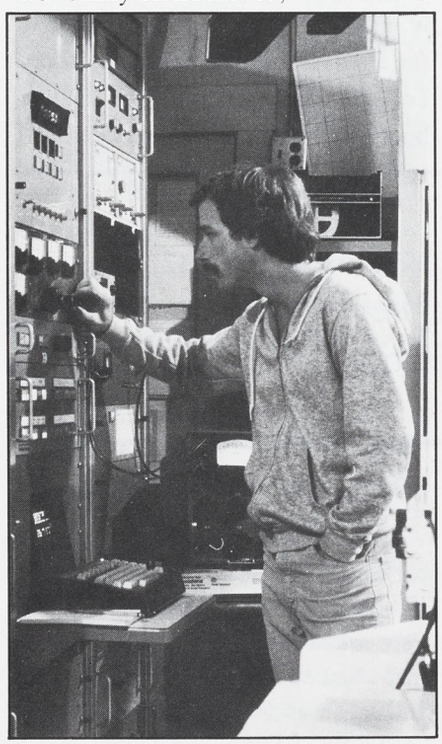
One of these places is Mount Wilson Observatory, cradled in the backwoods of the Angeles National Forest. Sixty years ago George Ellery Hale, who founded Mount Wilson in 1904, and Edwin Hubble, Hale's long-time associate and himself no dabbler in galactic astronomy, climbed the stairs to either the massive 60- or 100-inch telescopes, and eyed such wonders as the spirals of the galaxy *Canes Venatici,* and the rings of Saturn. Theirs was the often tedious job of tracking the planets, stars, or galaxies and recording and analyzing the data collected.

Mount Wilson has in some ways changed little since then. One sees the same steel telescopes, white domes, and wooden and metal catwalks inside those domes.

But in other ways, Mount Wilson barely resembles its look of earlier days. Now, in the age of automation and computers, the trips up and down stairs and the little struggles to properly focus one's eye on the telescope's eyepiece are rare. Now when the night assistant readies a telescope for a visiting astronomer he simply presses buttons to lower or raise the telescope, or shift it from right to left. Modern electronic devices store images of the sun on magnetic tape. And it takes thirty minutes to prism and photograph a star's light instead of the ten hours once required.

Larry Webster, Mount Wilson's chief solar observer, says George Hale would applaud the changes. Larry insists on being called a ''solar observer'' rather than an ''astronomer'' because, as he says, astronomers ''know more'' than he does and have college degrees.

Every morning just after sunup, the sandy-blond-haired, mustached 26-year-old steps into a steel box three feet deep and about as long and wide as an average coffee table. He then shoots to the top of the 150-foot solar telescope tower past criss-crossing ''Carnegie'' steel beams. On rare clear days he can even see Catalina Island.



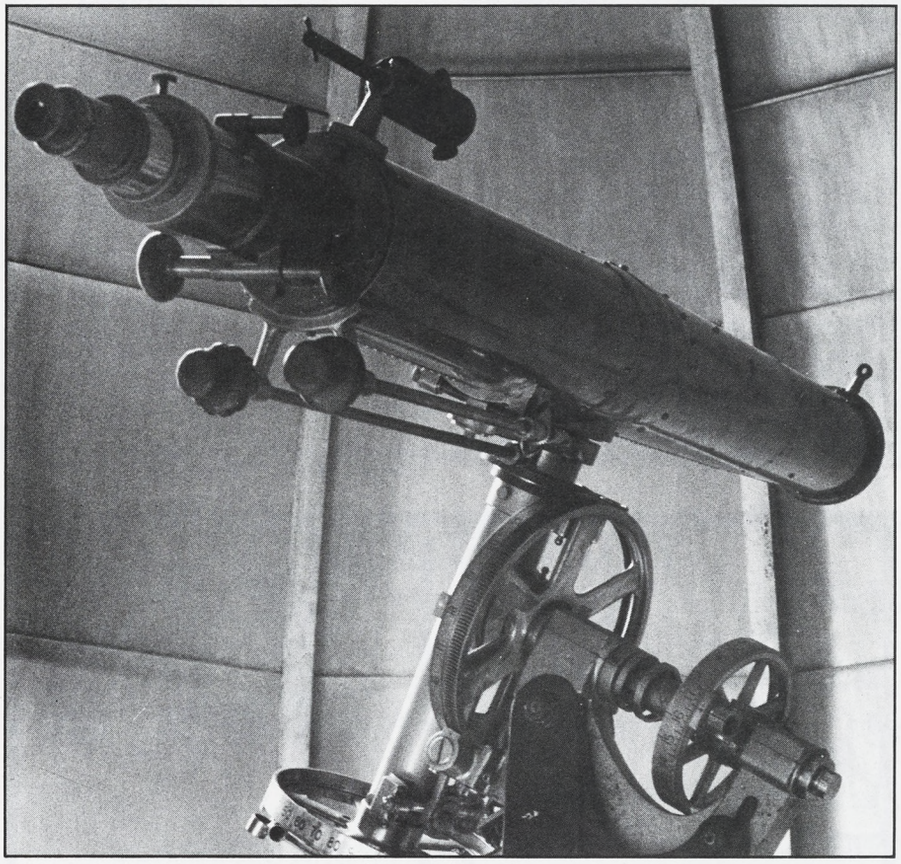
Larry Webster, Mt. Wilson's fifth solar observer, checks computer readouts.

At the top, Larry opens the mini-dome and aims the 12-inch telescope at the sun. Its rays, reflected by two mirrors, stream down the tower's central shaft and form an image in the ground-level observation room. From that image, Larry traces the sunspots onto paper, and takes a magnetogram, a computer-map of the sun showing the location, field intensity, and polarity of sunspots. At the 60-foot solar tower up the road, he takes five pictures of the sun through different colored filters, and double-checks his magnetogram observations by taking a ''dot-plot.''

Like all his solar observer predecessors, Larry lives on the mountain with the rest of the staff--ten in all--plus their families. Each family has its own home with cooking facilities so there's no need to eat at the ''Monastery'', the dormitory-like housing unit for visiting astronomers. The story goes that after reading a book about self- denying monks in the Himalayas, Hale dubbed the unit the Monastery. The name stuck, perhaps because it fit; in Mount Wilson's youth, wives weren't allowed to live on observatory grounds.

Photographs by Matt Winiarski

Visiting astronomers eat dinner at 5:30 in the Monastery. Hazel and Mary, who run it, cook the meal and arrange formal blue place settings on the white tablecloth. The main astronomer—the one using the 100-inch telescope—sits at the table's head. He passes the food to the "60-inch" astronomer who sits to his right, and gradually the food works its way around to the solar observers on the other side of the table. Through the dining room door is Hale's sitting room. His portrait hangs above the doorway leading into the dining area. In the corner of the room stands an old 3-inch telescope, and two filled bookshelves face each other from opposite walls. Down the hall are day rooms for astronomers doing solar work (and not too many do it these days), and night rooms for those working with the 60- or 100-inch telescopes.



This six-inch refracting telescope, only seven feet tall, was one of the first instruments installed on Mt. Wilson, six years before the observatory's official founding in 1904.

Before supper, a visiting astronomer arranges a time to meet one of the staff at an observatory. When the astronomer comes in that evening, the assistant sets the clock that paces the telescope's drive. "Put it on star five," the astronomer might say. So the nightman guides the telescope to star number five in a certain star cluster and locks the instrument in place so that the astronomer can record the data and take photographs.

At the Mount Wilson and Las Campanas Observatories headquarters in Pasadena, astronomers study the data they've gathered. Acting- director Dr. George Preston spends much of his time there, although he'd rather be scanning the stars and reciting limericks to his night assistant.

Sitting at a table in the middle of his office, he speaks in a deep, resonant voice. He says colleagues guffaw at the stereotypes many have of astronomers: men wearing turtleneck sweaters and glowing faces rapturously talking of the "stuff" of the cosmos. "It's not *that* romantic," Dr. Preston says. "It's much more business-like."

Larry laughs, too. He says the picture laymen have of bearded, starstruck men, smoking pipes and doing dreamy tasks, is unrealistic. Still, he suspects that astronomers do have that image of themselves in the "back of their minds". "They're just too proud to admit it," he says.

The true awe, Dr. Preston claims, comes in the lab where the data is analyzed. "The real wonder comes when you observe the growth of a star." For example, Preston says that stars actually expand and contract; when one expert in Boulder, Colorado claimed that our star--the sun--was getting smaller, it sent people at Mount Wilson scurrying to measure the sun's diameter from some of George Hale's old pictures. And so this process of curiosity, research and wonder goes on.

Larry Webster believes today's astronomer is different from those of old, a little more reserved and less enthusiastic. He says the change is something Mr. Hale would be "disappointed" with. "Those days were a second renaissance for science. The mood was definitely different then."

Dr. Preston doesn't see it that way. "Astronomers haven't changed one iota," he says in a slightly impatient tone. They still "come to their telescopes in anticipation of what they may learn. If an experiment produces positive results, they're flushed with excitement."

Astronomers (and solar observers) aren't only excited about what they learn. They also appreciate beauty. When he takes pictures of the sun and the "seeing is good," Larry feels like a little boy beholding snow for the first time. These things thrilled Hale and Hubble years ago. According to Dr. Preston, if they saw their Mount Wilson now, with its modern methods and machines, they'd be "envious...but still filled with awe."

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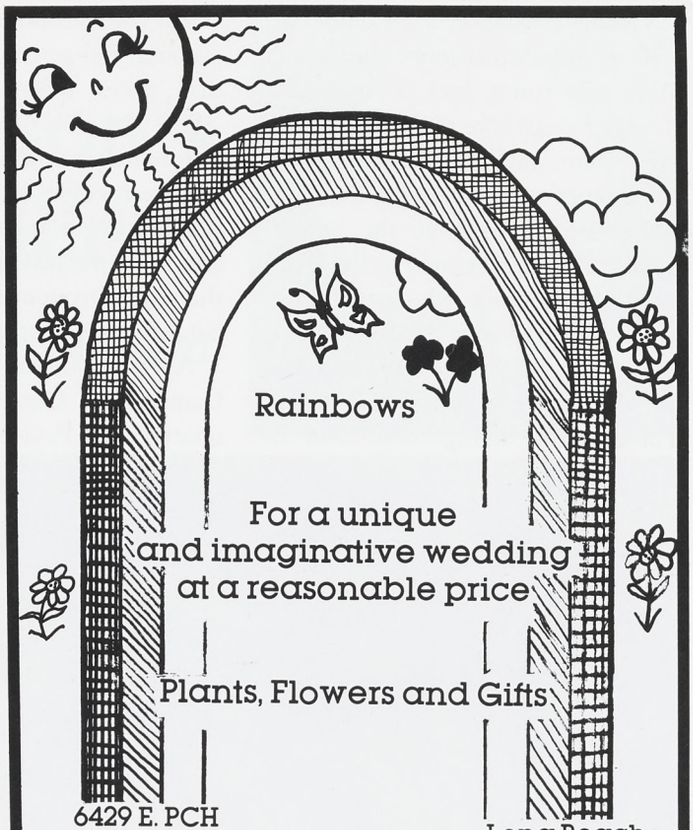

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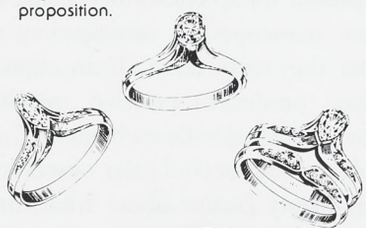

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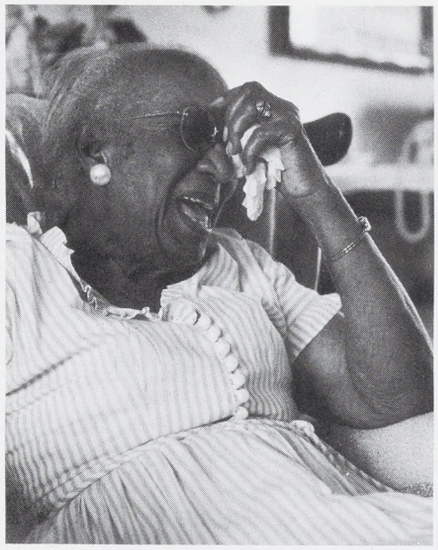

Celia Cox reflects on a long, full life and shares a lighter moment.

Photo by Matt Winiarski

"Do Not into That

An affirmation of

By Linda Leisner, Gerald

What do we call men and women no longer involved—whether by design or choice—in making a living? Some call them retirees, some senior citizens or the elderly, and others the Geritol set. Whatever the group name, they are increasing in numbers.

At the start of the twentieth century, there were about three million Americans over the age of 65. Today there are 24 million over that age, with another twenty million between the ages of 55 and 65. And according to a study conducted by scholars Alvin Rabuska, from Stanford University's Hoover Institute, and Bruce Jacobs, from the University of Rochester, by the year 2040 nearly twenty percent of all Americans—over fifty million—will be 65 or older.

Every Friday afternoon, smartly dressed couples Citizens Club while Larry Shay, composer of the

These men and women have fallen in love and reared families. They fought in wars and sent their children and grandchildren to fight other wars. They have had satisfying careers and in many ways contributed to the scientific, cultural, and industrial developments in our country. Although still plagued with such major problems as illness, inflation, and the fear of violent crimes, the active elderly remain highly productive in our society.

For many, retirement brings time to do things they have only dreamed about doing. For others, it is an opportunity to help their fellow man. And for some, it is just a time to meet and be with people they enjoy. This is the whole idea behind active seniors: "old folk" stepping out and doing the best they can to be happy.

Buff and Coy Parker pedal toward their morning coffee break with friends.

Photo by Matt Winiarski

Go Gentle Good Night''

the active elderly

His bow rosined and ready, Julliard graduate T. Duncan Stewart warms up for fast fiddling.

Photo by Joan Monroe

Miller and Debbie Stanley

sashay across the dance floor at the Oasis Senior classic ''When You're Smiling,'' leads his band.

Photo by Joan Monroe

Such is the case at the Oasis Senior Citizens Club in Corona del Mar. Chattering gray-haired men and women file through the doors of the former elementary school auditorium to the sound of music. Lyrics from old tunes, such as ''Has Anybody Seen My Gal'' and ''I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover'' can be heard drifting out across the well-manicured courtyard as the band warms up for another sing-along.

Inside, Larry, an 83-year-old composer of over 4,000 songs, plays the piano, and Gladys, the white-haired organist, accompanies him. Joe, a former USO entertainer in the fifties, and Howard, a retired engineer, strum banjos.

Sarah Kerr, a Coastline Community College instructor emeritus and a vivacious redhead, takes the mike to get the audience off to a rousing start by leading them in a few choruses of ''For Me and My Gal.'' Then she flashes the words to ''Harrigan That's Me'' onto the overhead screen and everyone sings.

Fingers snap, hands clap, and fifty neatly dressed men and women embrace and exchange greetings as they gather to sing their favorite songs and socialize. For a few minutes, the rafters rumble as they raise their voices in harmony.

But the tempo soon changes when they start to sing ''Peg of My Heart.'' The festive mood gives way to a melancholy one, and as the lyrics from the old tune waft through the room, couples leave their seats to dance. With the ease

(Continued)

Sarah Kerr and members from her five ''Singing with Sarah'' groups belt out Irish tunes at Newport Beach's Fashion Island Mall for a St. Patrick's Day sing-along.

Photo by Joan Monroe

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and grace that come from years of practice and familiarity, they sway in perfect unison. For awhile, the pages of time seem to be flipped back to another era.

A senior citzens club is a place where old folks can sing, dance, and have a few laughs a couple of days a week. Often it provides their only contact with the outside world, which can mean the difference between leading a lonely, isolated life and a full, rewarding one.

Since the establishment of the first senior citizens club in New York in 1943, 5,000 have sprung up across the country. Millions of Americans from sixty to ninety participate daily in numerous activities, according to the National Institute of Senior Centers. They include field trips to local events and even trips abroad. Centers offer classes in everything from needlepoint to investments, and hardly a day passes that one can't get a bridge game together. Some clubs parcel out little plots of land where members grow their own flowers and vegetables.

But not all can participate in these various activities. For some, Father Time has worn out a few parts, so they can no longer enjoy some of life's ordinary pleasures.

Muriel, a warm, stately-looking woman who recently turned eighty, comes to the Irvine Senior Citizens Club five days a week. If her daughter can't bring her, one of her friends from the club does because she can't see to drive, or to read and write. But there is nothing wrong with her hearing. So along with her lunch, Muriel packs a portable radio and comes prepared to spend the day.

Muriel's radio keeps her tuned-in to the latest news so she can participate in her newspaper class on current events. She also attends investment classes, even though, she says with a spark of humor, "I have very little left to invest.

"Actually, I don't do anything

here that I couldn't do at home,'' she says in a dignified tone, ''but at least I'm not alone. Every day there is something going on here that I enjoy and there is always someone to talk to and have lunch with.''

As she smooths her neat green dress and gazes sightlessly out across the rolling hills of the adjacent golf course, Muriel admits that when she reached seventy, she thought she was as old as Methuselah. ''I never dreamed that I would live to be eighty years old,'' she declares. But she is very satisfied with how she has lived her life and wouldn't change any part of it. She does admit, however, that not being able to do the things she used to do due to her blindness can be quite a bother.

Despite Muriel's handicap, she wouldn't change places with a twenty-year-old, even if she could. She believes that today's youth have too many burdens placed on them too soon. ''They have to deal with problems like sex, drugs, and money before they are even old enough to know what it's all about,'' she explains. And she doesn't think she would trade her vision loss for all those problems.

Whether they join the activities of a senior citizens club, do volunteer work, or participate in community affairs, most of those over 65 who are physically able want to stay active. Contrary to the stereotypes of indigent widows and tottering old men being carted off to the nearest nursing home, the elderly are generally healthy and financially secure. In fact, according to Rabuska and Jacobs, seventy percent of them live in their own homes, eighty percent are mobile and self-sufficient, and fewer than five percent live in institutions.

Many senior citizens use their freedom to help others, spending long hours volunteering in community hospitals, schools, and nursing homes. Jean Carver, 62, a volunteer counselor at the USC Andrus Gerontology Center, coordinates the Humor Project, which brings laughter and good clean fun to community nursing homes. Through the project, which began as a research study of one year, several senior volunteers visit long-term health facilities for the aged and present an hour-long program of comedy.

Presently, Carver, a four-year veteran volunteer, works in the Andrus Center's Leadership Program, which trains elderly adults to educate other seniors on various aspects of post-retirement life. ''I think it's the one group where the active volunteers really are active. They accept their responsibilities and are really dependable,'' she asserts. She believes elderly people are happier when they're involved. She also thinks that society is going to have to make growing older a better experience—''Give them something to look forward to, so a better lifestyle can be attained.''

What Carver and other seniors are doing shows the potential that the elderly community has. Dr. Dorothy Fornia, Director of Gerontology at CSULB, says that society doesn't now fully utilize the experience and knowledge of older adults. ''We have been a youth-oriented society, and the old haven't been treated with much respect.''

In the past, television, that great reflector of American culture, has carefully avoided portrayals of the elderly, whether realistic or not. And in a public opinion study for the National Council on Aging, pollster Louis Harris and Associates found that ''the American public has a distorted and unrealistically negative view of what it is to grow old.''

But Fornia believes that the stereotypes are slowly dying with the spread of knowledge. She says several television programs have recently begun dealing with the relationships of older adults, and points up research findings that refute the

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notion that younger people carry the stereotype of the elderly as inactive, unhappy people.

Dr. James Birren, a gerontologist at USC, says the emphasis on youth will lessen as shifts in population age and economic trends continue. In the earlier part of this century, he says, young, hard-working immigrants came to this country determined to make lives for themselves, with goals of establishing a family and a home. As a result, this country has traditionally been child and nuclear-family oriented.

"But we are becoming more adult-centered now. There has been a shift to the contented, comfortable way of living from the struggle to get one's hand on the lowest rung of the economic ladder." Birren thinks that as the shift continues, more attention will be given to adults— including the elderly—as well as single-unit families, people living alone.

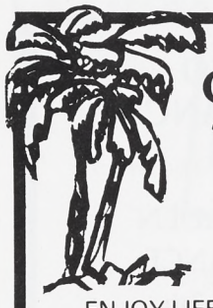
Mary, a 78-year-old Irish woman with sparkling blue eyes and bouncing red hair, is one such single-unit family. But she is far from alone. "I've been waiting on people all me life," she says in a heavy Irish brogue. "I raised three children and worked thirty years as a nurse, so I see no reason for stoppin' now."

At eight a.m. every day, she leaves her modest frame house and walks to the Holy Family Cathedral to attend Mass. There, she keeps busy all day with her various charities. Through the Teen Challenge Program at church, she tries to find jobs for men and boys recently released from jail; through the Catholic Daughters, she collects and distributes clothes and visits the sick. She also teaches English to Vietnamese refugees two days a week at the church's international school.

Of all the work Mary does to help others, she finds teaching the refugees the most rewarding. She tells how one of her former students had to learn enough English to gain entrance to a local college or be deported. "I worked every day, all day, for four weeks. I worked so hard sometimes I thought I would have a heart attack," she admits. "But in the end I was so happy because he was accepted." She has not seen the young man since he started college, but she does hear from him through other students. "Yes, me dear, he is doing just wonderful, thanks be to the Lord," she exclaims.

It isn't only the needy whom Mary helps. Every Saturday she serves as a church wedding hostess. "Oh me dear," she says with a twinkle in her eyes, "I have to see that the beaut'ful brides get down the aisle without getting a run in their stockin's and that everybody finds their way to the toilet."

Mary had been married fifty years when her husband died two years ago. Her secret to a long, happy marriage was that she always listened to her husband. "I listened first,"



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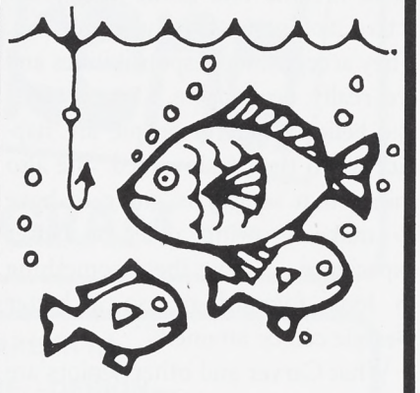

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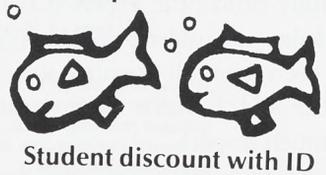

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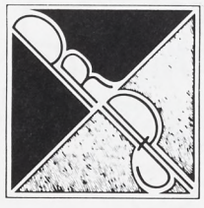

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she says with a hearty laugh, ''but in the end I always won.''

A pretty lady with curly hair and a creamy complexion, Mary believes that she is just as happy today—if not more so—than she was fifty years ago. The good old days, she says, weren't all that great.

''What's so good about scrubbing clothes on a washboard after you have worked all day?'' she asks. ''I'm glad those days are gone.'' She thinks we have every modern convenience we could ask for, and is particularly impressed with television and jet travel.

Perhaps modern technology has improved the lifestyles of many Americans, but then again it may also have had the opposite effect. Of all the technically-developed countries in the world, the discrepancy in life expectancies between men and women is greatest in the United States. Birren quotes statistics: The longevity of American women ranks in the top six worldwide, while that of American men is about seventeenth a seven-to-eight year difference in life expectancies at birth.

Certainly, many widows like Mary need no one to tell them that there is a startling and growing numerical imbalance between the sexes in men and women over 65. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, during the first four decades of this century, the ratio of males to females 65 and older was about one-to-one. Due to an increase in female longevity, today there are just two men for every three women among seniors. And according to Fornia, death rates show that we are moving toward a ratio of one man for every four women over 65.

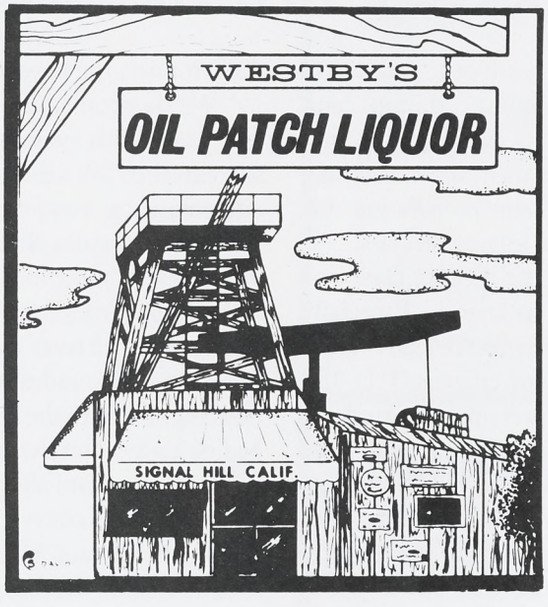
Birren feels the problem lies at the root of our society. ''We must find why the American way of life is so hard on men,'' he says. He cites the rise of behavioral medicine as one attempt to cope with the puzzle. The discipline emphasizes diet, exercise, and particularly relaxation.

The Parkers, Buff and Coy, are a perfect example of what good exercise and relaxation can do. Together they make a busy couple, riding bikes and making christening gowns for friend's children and grandchildren. ''We both like the same things and we won't go without one another hardly,'' says Coy Parker.

Every morning at seven a.m., he and Buff ride their bicycles along the sixteen-mile bike path which runs past their beachfront home. For Buff, the daily jaunt provides a time of recreation and socializing with friends. A gold bicycle charm hangs around her neck, a present from Coy on their 21st bike- riding anniversary.

After their morning rides, the Parkers often work on the christening gowns. Coy knits, and Buff crochets the garments together, the ''hard part,'' she says.

Buff, a tiny, gracious woman with beautifully coiffed hair and matching



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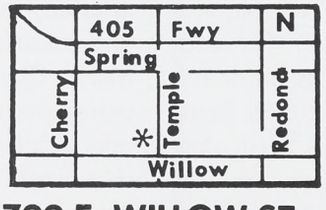

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gray eyes, divides the rest of her time between the local women's club, volunteer work for Children's Hospital at the South Bay Auxiliary Thrift Shop, and the Redondo Beach First Baptist Church, where she is a deaconess and Coy is an usher. Coy, a tall erect man with a stiff white moustache and alert blue eyes, earned his living as a roofing contractor. He now spends his time gardening, working on fishing tackle, enjoying the surrounding beach environment, and romancing his wife. For the Parkers, the honeymoon continues after 56 years.

"It's a give and take proposition," says Coy of their enduring marriage. "You have to give and you have to take. Both of us don't get mad at the same time. It just seems like it all fits in."

"It's just being patient," Buff adds. "We really don't have too many problems. Coy and I have had a very blessed life."

The Parker's health is one such blessing. Coy's blood pressure equals that of a teenager; he says his doctor predicts he'll live to be 105 and then be murdered by a jealous, 21-year-old husband. Buff laughs heartily at this. "It comes from not smoking or drinking and I'll tell you," she says with a lilting southern twang in her voice, "our bodies are so much younger than our years, our doctors don't know what to do with us."

Both were raised in Paris, Texas,

They Need Exercise, Too.

Bright red work-out pads land with a resounding thump and laughter fills the air. Students find their charts, tie their shoes and hike up their pants in preparation for another physical education class.

But neither this fitness class nor its students is ordinary. Especially designed by instructor Dr. Ruth Lindsey for senior citizens, P.E. 198 has only one prerequisite: students must be over sixty years old. Only the oldest—age 74—will divulge an age. "At least you know I'm over sixty," another senior jock quips. "You have to be that old to get in here."

Most PE classes start out with the students doing warm-up exercises to the beat of a fast, snappy tune. But in this class, that music has been replaced; instead the soft, mellifluous voice of Andy Williams crooning "I Love You" drifts through the room as ten elderly students lie quietly on mats.

For a few minutes they simply listen to the music and relax. Then, with the aid of Dr. Lindsey, co-author of four books on physical fitness, and Beverly Greer, her assistant, each student checks his or her pulse rate and records it on a chart. Now the senior citizens begin slow warm-up exercises. "Don't do real deep knee-bends," Dr. Lindsey cautions. "If you do it too hard or too deep, it hurts the knee joints."

"We do about the same activities as a class with younger students," she explains. "We just do them at a different pace. And of course there are some activities that some of the students can't do, but they try."

And try they do. As a soft summer-like breeze blows through the open doors and another instruction issues from the record player, bodies clad in bright blue warm-up suits, white gym shorts or brown slacks hasten to obey.

But not all can. Mary Alexander, a refined lady with impeccably coiffured gray hair, winces in pain as part of her arthritic body fails to respond. But she doesn't give up. Instead, she laughs, tumbles over, and waits for an exercise she can do.

To some, PE 198 offers more than instruction. It brings a chance to meet new friends and to see old ones. Ruth Gay, a 74-year-old grandmotherly type, says, "I owe a lot to this class because of the friendships I have made, which is probably the most important for me."

One friend she made is Sister Marie Therese, a 95-pound ball of energy seemingly in perpetual motion. Sister Therese has attended the class every Tuesday and Thursday at 2 p.m. for three years. This year she added an 11 a.m. swim class to loosen up before exercising.

"I want to keep my mind and body fit," she says, as she does a knee bend and stretches her 5-foot, 1 inch frame to its fullest height. "Elderly people want to give up too soon. They should be out doing what I'm doing and they wouldn't wear out so soon."

Sister Therese, a member of the teaching order Sisters of Loretto, shows no sign of wearing out or down. After teaching school for forty years, she retired and has since taken classes in "everything from religious studies to folk dancing."

This year, besides her studies, she is secretary for the CSULB Senior Citizen's Club. The club began in 1977 to help and encourage students over sixty in their adjustment to college life. Sister Therese also conducts interviews for a CSULB-sponsored study to determine how senior citizens spend most of their time.

Sister Therese says the only difference between her life today and thirty years ago is that today she is freer and smarter. Freer because she has a wider range of activities to choose from, and smarter because she can now study for her own enrichment and enjoyment.

Whether they come for enrichment or enjoyment, the students in PE 198 get both. --Linda Leisner

he a country boy and she a city girl. They met at a well-chaperoned fishing party over a box of candy called "Chest of Gold," which both had grabbed.

"And that was it," Buff remarks simply, throwing her hands in the air and smiling. "Because I was spending so much time with Coy that day, the fella I was with wouldn't ride back with me."

"He wasn't using the right kinda bait," Coy says slyly, adding that he himself certainly was. Six months later, in a home wedding on January 25, 1925, Bertha Notley and Charles Parker became husband and wife.

Her real name, Buff explains with a groan, is Bertha. Coy's is Charles. She sticks her tongue out. She tells the story of a neighbor boy who couldn't say their names, instead calling the pair "Buff and Coy."

"Bertha and Charlie will get old, but Buff and Coy, never," says Coy. Buff agrees enthusiastically.

To the Parkers, aging is a state of mind. "Think young, don't think old," Buff advises. "I have so many friends who say 'I'm so old.'" She slumps in her chair, then straightens. "Well, we *are* old, but we don't *think* old, and Coy and I don't even *feel* old."

But where, oh where, is the Fountain of Youth? What is the key to this youthful vigor?

Coy suggests staying with young people. Buff recommends keeping busy. "We're just everywhere," she says. "Everybody knows us. Everywhere we go, it's 'Hidy! Hidy! Hidy!' " She waves her hands happily. "We talk to everybody."

For Buff and Coy, life is progression, not regression. No Fountain of Youth, nor strange elixirs or wonder drugs for prolonged youth exist; activity is the key. Constant movement forward through volunteer work, children, travel, and rejuvenating romance distinguish aging from being old. As Buff says: "We don't stop."

Such vigor and spirit in the later years come only through continued stretching and exertion of the mental and physical muscles. The ways of continued vitality vary as much as the seniors who practice them.

Perhaps the most common social outlet for the elderly, and therefore a vehicle for activity, is church-going. Doctors Birren and Fornia agree that religion plays a big part in the lives of a large number of seniors: raised in religious homes, they have continued church attendance as part of a lifelong habit. Church lets seniors extend their circle of friends with people of their own background, and church ministries are a source of comfort to them.

Religion's role in the life of Christopher Colombus Carhee has also been great. At age 100, Carhee has spent eighty of those years in the ministry. Speaking slowly, yet steadily and with conviction, he proclaims his faith in Christianity: "Jesus gives me everything I need."

Though partly blind and with a minor hearing loss and aching bones, Carhee manages to travel 13,000-30,000 miles a year as an evangelist. "Go. That's my mission. G-O. The Bible says go into the world and preach." He also occasionally tends to his vegetable garden at the home he shares with his wife and two daughters.

Chuckling with folded arms, his wrinkly, unshaven face and bald head hint at his age. Carhee advises young people to do right, behave and observe the golden rule. "I always tried to be honest and treat people the way I wanted to be treated." His secret to a long and happy life is to "do good, keep the Lord first in your life, and 'honor your father and mother that your days may be long upon earth.' "

Celia Cox, 94, is one more senior who involves herself with religious activity. A Sunday School teacher for the past 36 years, Celia has a pas-

(Continued on page 37)

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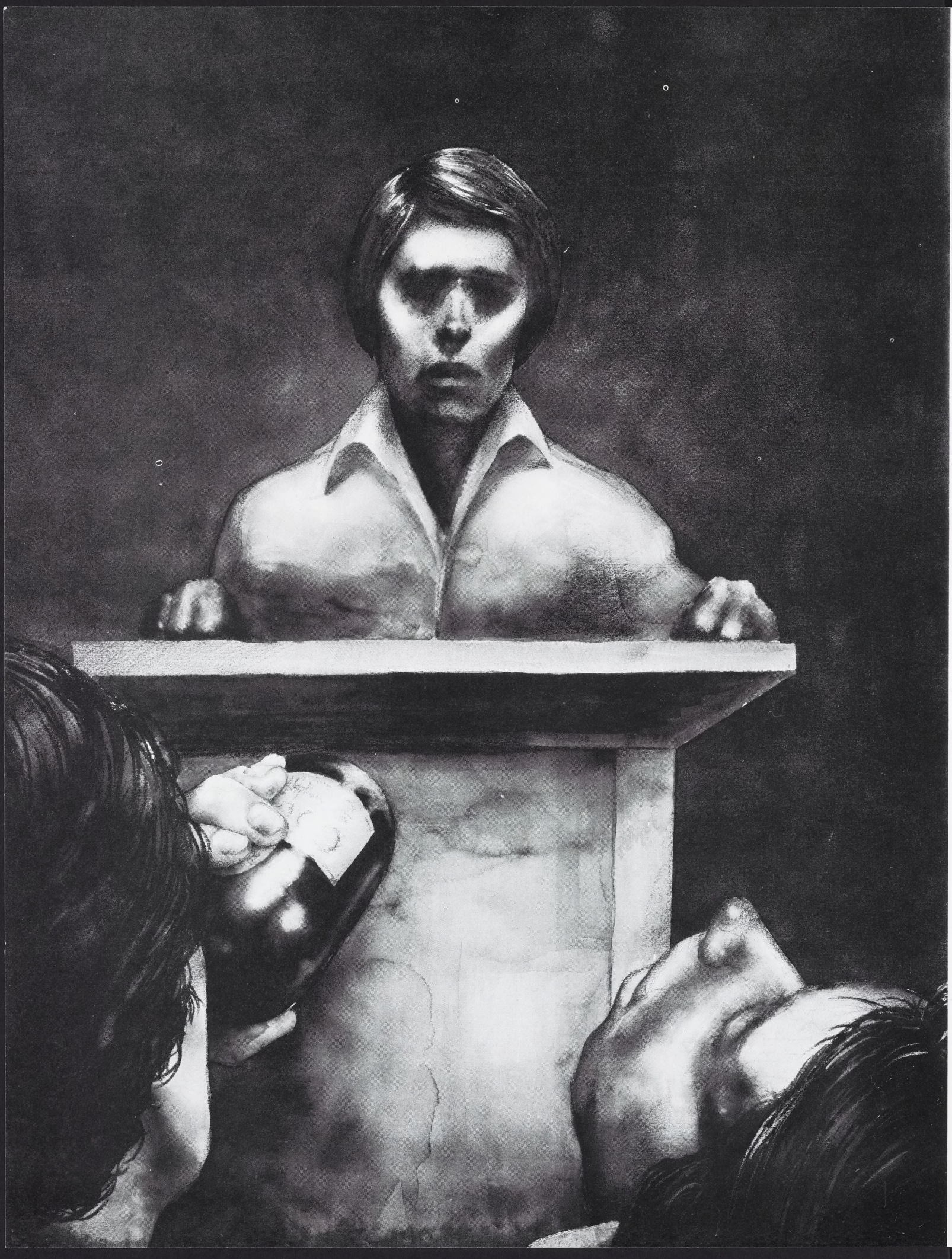


Read It and Weep

Virgin readers and staggering drunks gather in the backroom of a local bookstore

By Jon Tilley

I'd felt the same way the night I lost my virginity. My stomach seemed to be shifting positions like a restless sleeper, my hands trembled, and I had this troubling thought that I would soon lose an innocent and important part of myself.

Walking down the sidewalk, I clutched the manila envelope containing three typewritten poems I would read onstage at Long Beach's Chelsea Bookstore that night. I had never read my poems to an audience, though I'd imagined doing so when alone and reading aloud in my apartment. Addressing a group of strangers at the Chelsea open poetry reading would be a sobering experience, perhaps a humbling one, because if I was poorly-received the wound it would carve would take a long while to heal.

I gripped the envelope tighter while excusing myself past a small gathering of people at the bookstore's entrance. Holding the manila envelope in front of me like an admission ticket, I approached the front counter and signed my name next to the number 12 on the list of poets scheduled to read.

This was my first time at the Chelsea Bookstore, which I'd heard classmates praise for its selection of art and poetry books. Only a few miles from CSULB near the intersection of Broadway and Cherry avenues, the bookstore squats unpretentiously wall-to-wall with other unpretentious shoebox buildings— Andre's Doggie Salon, Reflections by Victoria Hair Cutters, Little's Bar. It's one of forty-odd sites in Southern California that in the past half-decade have cleared floors and stages for periodic readings by local poets—some at universities, some at coffeehouses, churches, theaters, museums, city libraries, and some at small bookstores like Chelsea.

Chelsea's interior seemed comforting to me, warm and uninhibiting. The dark brown maze of pine bookshelves and tables, zig- zagging to the rear of the building, complimented the soft cream walls and ceiling, and displayed eschelons of books, books, books. The odor of fresh ink breathing from open magazines blended with a dusty fragrance of pine. Recorded flute music trilled canary-like from somewhere behind the front counter. Long ceiling lights bent in white smiles on the sleek surfaces of wall posters.

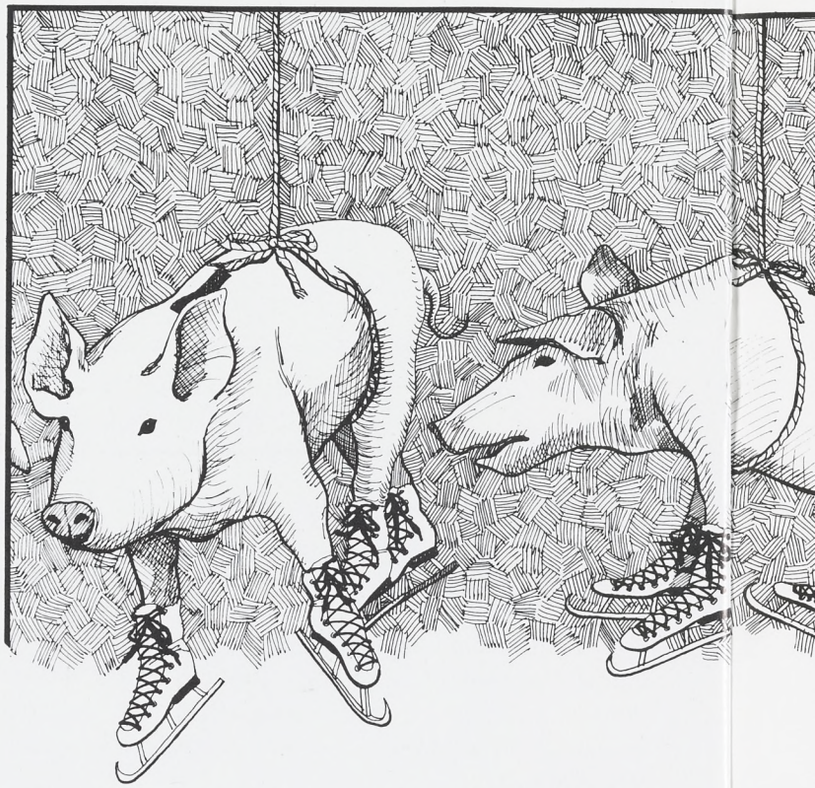
I meandered through the bookshelf maze looking for familiar faces—classmates had said they would come to the readings—but found none. I wandered into the small, rectangular back room where the readings would take place. A stronger pine fragrance hung in this room, heavy and musty. The painted gray cement floor reflected the harsh light of six bare bulbs suspended from an exposed wood ceiling. Four crooked rows of folding chairs ran the room's length facing a low stage extending ten feet from the front wall. At stage center, a rickety wooden podium stood silently, waiting. The front wall of ancient faded brick soothed my anxiety somewhat—it reminded me of a wall from my childhood, one I used to shatter bottles against, watching with delight the sparkling explosions on the oranges and grays.

On the back wall, a long rectangular mirror reflected the podium and bricks. Suspended in front of the mirror, a white piggy bank the size of a bed pillow dipped its snout toward the floor. Besides its size (the slot in its spine could easily swallow hockey pucks), this pig had other peculiarities—it wore ice skates on all four hooves, and it was frowning. It floated surrealistically before its reflection.

People filed into the room as I took my seat. A few of my classmates were in the crowd, though none seemed to recognize me. I caught snatches of conversation as people sat down—"I heard Gerry Locklin read his 'Poop' poems in Laguna...." "Ronald Koertge read a wonderfully sad poem about Bambi trying to find happiness...."

The man from the store's front counter took the stage.

Illustration by Greg Miller



"Okay," he said, acting as emcee, "let's get started, people. We've got 36 readers on the list, so each poet will have only about five minutes up here. There'll be a break halfway through the readings so you can go to the can or go get something to drink. There's a liquor store just down the street." Some of the crowd cheered, and with that, the readings began.

A variety of poetry unfurled from the stage that night, ranging from adjective-heavy simplistic to meandering mixed-metaphor complex, from alcoholic death wishes in the manner of Charles Bukowski to fairytale frivolity a la Richard Brautigan, with the latter receiving the loudest applause.

All the lights were off now except one glaring directly above the podium, which cast long pointy shadows down the readers' faces, giving them a macabre Kabuki look. One man played a fiddle and sang about God's eventual destruction of this sinful planet, using covetousness and avarice as His missiles. Another man got onstage with an electric guitar hooked up to an amplifier the size of a thick dictionary and launched into a happy song about the joys of being dead.

One woman swaggered behind the podium, lecturing more on "the pains of being a woman" than reciting poetry. Another woman, after reading at least ten poems infested with cliched metaphors and simplistic images, refused to leave the stage. "Let me read just one more," she said. "This is my favorite one. I wrote it just last week." She gave up the stage only after the audience let out several collective "boos" and actually lobbed a few well-aimed wads of paper her way.

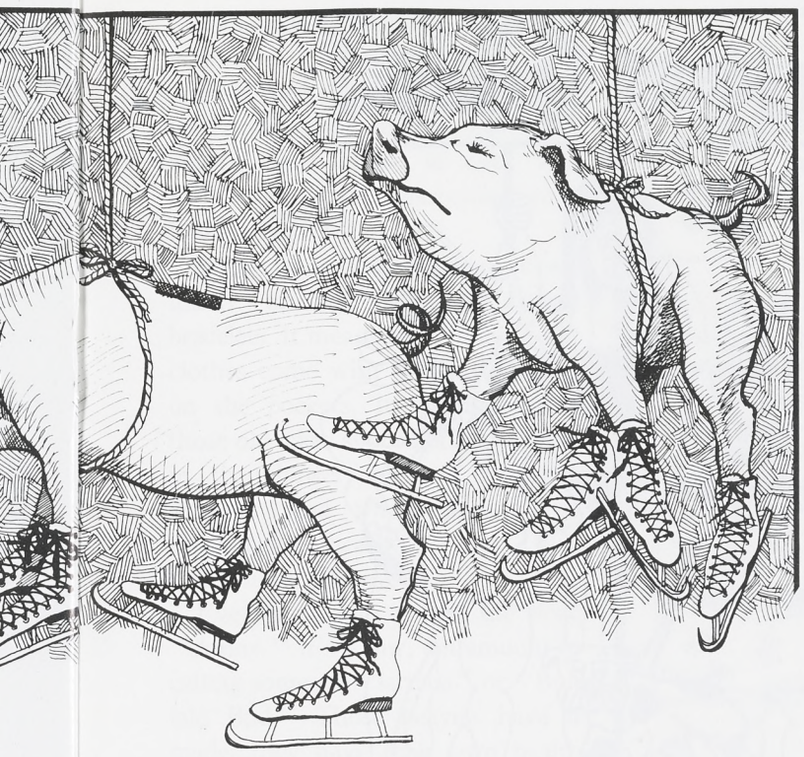
> "Ronald Koertge read a wonderfully sad poem about Bambi trying to find happiness."

The next reader, following her example, also refused to leave the stage. He wasn't jeered by the audience, however, since he weighed over 250 pounds, wore heavy cowboy boots with pointed toes, and had a face that would unnerve Edgar Allan Poe. Despite his gruff appearance, he read mostly tender love poems, all directed toward his wife, an obese, cherub-faced woman sitting in the front row smiling sheepishly. Although touching at first, his poems became boring and even annoying by the time he finished the tenth. The emcee eventually told him, "That's enough. Your time's up. I'm sorry." After leaving the stage in a huff, he grumbled to his wife, "I was just getting to the good ones."

One poet, a bearded man with long scraggly hair, staggered onto the stage clad in dirty jeans and baggy army jacket. He held tightly onto the podium, which creaked in protest whenever he faltered. Even with his slurred and drunken delivery, his poems had a sensitivity and power that few other poets came even close to expressing. His images came clear and precise, invoking the senses. And his themes—death and childhood—were freshly approached, clean of cliches and treacle. He seemed hurt when the audience showed little response to the poems. A few listeners clapped meekly here and there. A small group in the room's left rear corner chattered and giggled, guzzling beer and wine; they laughed whenever someone in their party accidently kicked over a bottle onto the cement floor.

Now came my turn to read. I felt dazed; my hands trembled and my knees shook. I gripped the podium's edge until my knuckles turned white, made whiter still by the glaring light overhead. I was aware of bright faces blotting the darkness below me, but saw none distinctly. The surrealistic pig floated directly in front of me, blocking the back wall mirror. My voice quivered while reading my first poem. "This is called 'To My Ex-Wife.'" I cleared my throat, gathering myself, and began: "I murdered our child." Some of the crowd laughed. I stopped. I'd intended that line to be intense and powerful, not humorous. I cleared my throat again, and started over:

"I murdered our child.
I was the one who insisted
on the abortion.
I remember asking you what it was like.
'You can never know,' you said.
Oh, I read the literature:



'Abortions are the best performed before
the tenth week of pregnancy.'
But even in the early ones,
they sometimes find whole body parts:
legs, arms, hands the size of ticks,
all in that mass
that's not yet baby.''

More laughs came, and a few ''oohs'' and ''ahs,'' mocking the serious tone I'd intended. Other than that, nothing came but sporadic coughs and a silence screaming, ''Boredom!'' I grew more anxious. The chain from the lightbulb annoyingly tickled the top of my head. I brushed it aside, but it persisted.

''Um, this next poem is called 'Lockup.' It's about the room in a mental hospital where the patients labeled 'incorrigible' are put until they...well, until they calm down.'' I cleared my throat and took a deep breath.

''It was a continual sound, the people
upstairs kicking the walls.
I would hear it, a dull thump thump
at the edge of the ceiling.
It was nearly regular
like a pulse, like a finger
tapping in my head.
Voices would not carry through,
cries of anger, curses, screams
would not carry through;
but always that damned thumping,
that crooked finger tapping tapping.''

No response came from the audience. My heart pounded. I felt hot with blushing. My legs suddenly seemed feeble. ''That's all,'' I said timidly, stepping down from the stage to hollow and perfunctory applause. The surrealistic pig frowned. Laughter shot from the corner where the beer and wine flowed.

Once back in my chair, I squirmed uneasily. A quick glance around the room showed that nobody was staring at me. I looked up at the ceiling where nails met their shadows in the wood beams. And then, as the next poet read, I noticed four faint rectangles in the front wall where windows had been sealed up with ancient bricks. Surprisingly, I hadn't noticed them before. The mortar had seeped between the bricks, drying jagged and craggy like gray scabs.

I chose not to stay for the entire reading. Scooping up my jacket and poems at the break, I wove my way through bodies and bookshelves until I was out on the night-dark sidewalk. The cool air nipped at my cheeks as I walked to my car. I passed Andre's Doggie Salon, where in the window sat a stuffed Snoopy in sad blue neon light. Next door, in Reflections by Victoria, I spotted a faded surgical glove draped over the back of a straw chair. From Little's Bar, a woman's laughter pierced the empty night, echoing off the buildings across the street.

His poems had a power and sensitivity that few other poets came even close to expressing.

Reaching the corner, I noticed a man crossing the street, moving unsteadily toward me. It was the bearded, long-haired poet, who seemed drunker than before.

''Hey, I enjoyed your poetry reading tonight,'' I said.

The man was taken aback at first, looking somewhat fearful. He brushed the hair from his eyes and stared, trying to focus on me. ''You, uh, were there?'' he mumbled. ''Hey, um, thanks man.'' The sad pallor of his face seemed to vanish for an instant, so that he looked rather shy, almost boyish.

''I liked the metaphor you used for death,'' I continued. ''Um, you know, the conch shell being worn away by the sea and wind. I mean, I thought it was a beautiful image. And, um, I liked all your other images, too. I could really picture what you were reading about.''

He smiled slightly, then looked down at the sidewalk. ''Yeah, well, thanks man,'' he repeated. When he looked up again, his eyes seemed shallow, void of emotions. ''Uh, see ya 'round,'' he said, staggering off, a vague and pitiful figure under street lamps, hands in pockets, head bent low.

I sighed, feeling a great emptiness in my chest. ''Yeah, see ya around,'' I said softly to myself.

Illustration by Marianne McCann

Let's Liberate the Lean

Humor by Carol Carlsen

During the sizzling Sixties, being a minority was truly a handicap. Sure, liberal hearts the country over ached and bled for you; compassionate friends threw freedom marches for you; but on the way home, guess who still rode in the back of the bus? With the mellow Seventies came better days—Equal Opportunity Employers, the gay and women's rights movements, affirmative action—the doors were finally opening.

Nowadays, being "out" is "in", and the problems of real minorities pale in comparison to the chic, chips-on-the-shoulders New Minorities. Everybody's jumping on the bandwagon: for instance, at the Student Union I recently overheard the challenge of one mediocre scholar to another: "Yeah, so I'm a left-handed Barry Manilow fan with hypoglycemia. Wanna make somethin' of it?"

Yes, the name of the game is elitism, and anyone with anything—however minute—to get huffy over, and with the guts to protest can play. Frankly, I worried: as a Visa Card-carrying WASP whose grandmother died with her D.A.R. button clenched between her teeth, I just plain couldn't find a sub-group to call my own. I felt about as special as a sunflower seed in a five-pound bag of Trail Mix.

Admittedly, this problem really depressed me for awhile. Imagine never having felt society's scorn, never having raged at the oppressor's discrimination! Then one night I stumbled upon my own cause to crusade for.

I was standing around my favorite bistro and pick-up joint, trying to appear nonchalant, when I overheard some bozo in a day-glo disco shirt with matching shoes say, "Hey man, I'm going to hit on the skinny one." My first instinct was to play Good Samaritan and warn the wretch—poor thing—that a real weenie was heading her way, drooling. I craned my head all around, searching for the frail-framed sack of bones, but the only girl nearby was little me!

I don't care to remember the rest of it; I think I squeaked something about preferring to be called "pleasingly emaciated" and sashayed out indignantly.

Slowly, the rage subsided, thanks to a few Tequila Sunrises. I began to see that a Divine Hand had steered me to this moment of realization: I had been to the mountaintop! All these years I thought I was just petite—slender. Actually, I was skinny, a minority! I would go forth and fight for the rights of my people!

But after four fruitless days of missionary zeal, I found that when it comes to the Heartbreak of Underweight, nobody gives a damn. The ordinary man-on-the-street thinks "skinny is good". "Statistically speaking, you will live longer and feel more vigorous," doctors say, "and have only a passing acquaintance with bad Mr. Cholesterol." The average spiteful housewife refuses to hear our pleas, sneering, "Where's your cellulite, hon?"

It's especially hard to get any sympathy for skinniness from female friends. They pretend only to be envious, but they only see a thin person as a fresh start, a blank slate waiting to have tomorrow's menu scribbled on it. "Quit sniveling," they snarl. "If I had your shape, I could gorge myself all day." What these well-meaning pals don't realize is that a piece of banana cream pie that melts in their mouths sits like a lump inside a skinny person; it gives her tiny stomach the bloats. Try getting any compassion with that one!

Illustration by Madeleine A. Cazian

Even worse, men have a definite preference for fleshier women over railroad ties. Sure, they may ogle tall, thin fashion models, but when you're back home in bed, it's, ''Have you been sharpening your hipbones again?''

Being underweight means being totally unable to retain bangle bracelets. It means that many of our clothes come with Winnie-the-Pooh on the pockets. It means bearing those old jokes about not getting wet in the shower, or not casting a shadow. And who wants to go through life hearing, ''Hey Olive Oyl, where's Popeye?''

I've even begun to hate the word ''skinny.'' It's a slur, tantamount to calling someone ''lardass'' or ''Buffalo Bod.'' Those heavies have it made: they have their own health spas, therapy clubs, dress shops, low-cal T.V. dinners, and Miss Piggy. They not only outweigh us, they outnumber us. Unfortunately, pound per pound, ''thinnies'' are definitely a fringe group, and one that is shrinking every day.

To tell the truth, I've had it. The ponderous people of the world have held us down and sat on us long enough. It's time for us ''mighty mites'' to come out of the broom closet and promote skinny power. Towards this end, I am forming the Student Committee to Reform Americans With Negative Ideas about Ectomorphs (S.C.R.A.W.N.-I.E.). Our slogan is, ''less is more!,'' and first, we demand our own telethon, with David Bowie as a combination poster child and singer of our theme song, ''Dem Bones, Dem Bones.'' Second, we want support groups, luncheon specials, and congressional lobbyists. Protest T-shirts will soon be available, in sizes 3 to 6x.

All we ask is recognition of our rights. We must stand united, knobby shoulder to knobby shoulder, and show the world that, though tiny, we can still throw our weight around!

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A Pretty How Town

Fiction by Adrienne Byers

Carlin stared at his homework, at the pile of books and papers on his unmade bed. English, ugh. They'd been reading that guy in class—Cummings—no, *cummings.* The man wrote like he'd never been to grammar school in his life. One poem, though, the one he'd been assigned to read and explain, just didn't make sense. Exhausted, bored, he went to the bed and lifted the book, turning to the poem. He'd read it over and over for two weeks, getting irritated, never understanding. But he needed this class to keep his football scholarship, so he would do every assignment given. *Shit.*

"Anyone lived in a pretty how town," he read, "with up so floating many bells down." Now what sort of crap was that? He read, his lips moving, but his mind already strayed, thinking something else, something he didn't want to remember. Thinking about this time last year, a year ago this very same day.

He recalled rising at dawn every day after it happened, running down to Mobley's General Store to buy a paper where he'd rip it open, scan the small black headlines, and, finding no mention of it, would shut his eyes in relief and throw *The Desert Times* into the trash. And he'd smile. Carlin had always known the next move, the right move, and misfortune seldom rode with people like that, with dudes smart enough to have survived, even enjoyed, growing up in a dry, shriveled desert town like Blake.

But misfortune had happened, goddammit. Of course, though, Carlin hadn't meant it to; his mind had just been somewhere else than on the California asphalt he'd been driving down. He hadn't told anyone what had happened because nobody would believe him anyway; they wouldn't understand; they'd just lock him up, let him rot; his football scholarship, his savings, and his women would all be gone.

Still reading the poem, Carlin's eyes scanned the line, "one day anyone died i guess," and suddenly he snapped the book closed.

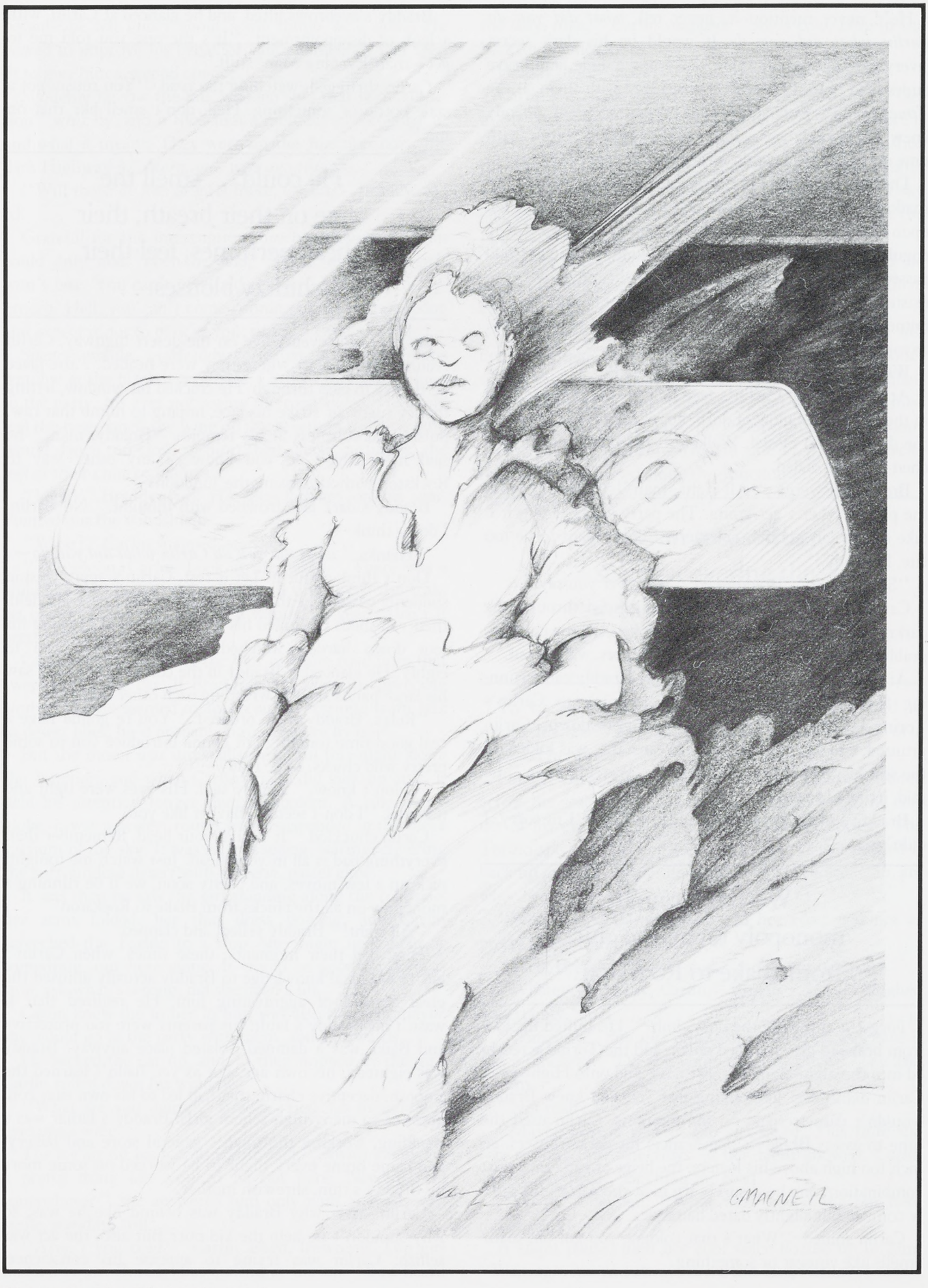

Illustration by Chris MacNeil

He'd never mention it, never tell. *what did you do Carlin what did you do* It would be his dark secret (everybody needed one). He was a brave dude, and brave dudes held onto their secrets, even died with them. If the *Times* hadn't discovered and printed it, then nobody knew and nobody was going to. He was still young, with time on his side; he would forget what he did. Very easily.

The sun slunk behind the eastern mountains; the gray shadows grew long into the still-warm sand as dusk fell upon the desert. He watched the night shadows slowly engulf the land from his bedroom window. A year had passed since his dark secret had come abruptly alive, into existence. But nobody had ever found out; now he was home free. The advantages of a desert community. *anyone lived in a pretty how town.*

What did you do Carlin what did you do

At the window, Carlin's face twisted into a smile, and in the last orange glow of dusk, he reached up, and yanked the dark curtain closed. Walked to the phone on the kitchen wall and dialed.

Braddy answered. "All right, man," Carlin said into the phone. "Let's get going. The party starts at ten; it'll take at least an hour to get there. I don't want to be too late. Be ready."

"Sure, Carlin," Braddy said, "whatever you say."

Carlin clicked off, and the sound echoed through the darkness of the house. He felt for the keys on the counter, grabbed them, and on the heels of his boots, walked out.

At Carlin's loud, insistent honking, Braddy came running from his small house, came running to Carlin's Torino, opened the door, and plopped down. Carlin grunted, and snatched the blue sweater that was folded on the seat just before Braddy sat on it. "Watch it, man," he said, irritated already.

Braddy's large, dark eyes turned to him. "I'm sorry, I didn't see—"

> "We'll be running a monopoly on all the chicks from Blake to Rockston!"

"Forget it and close the door, huh?" He shifted his foot from brake to gas, stomped down, and the Torino screeched into the night along the dirt road, and onto Highway 6. Carlin didn't feel like talking just yet, and knew Braddy wouldn't dare trespass on his thoughts. Carlin used the time to assess Braddy's appearance, his dark trousers, an inch too high above his loafers; the beige sweater and shirt combination (one he'd surely fry in at the party); his neatly combed but slightly dated hairstyle.

Carlin sniffed. "What's that cologne you got on, man? Smells like vinegar or something."

Braddy's eyebrows lifted, and he glanced at Carlin, with a look of disappointment. "It's the one you told me to get—that 'Evening Man' stuff."

Carlin shrugged, watching the road. "You musta got a stale bottle or something. Hell, don't smell like that on me."

> He could. . . smell the wine on their breath, their cheap perfumes, feel their chintzy blouses. . .

As they did seventy-five on the desert highway, Carlin realized with a start where they were headed. . .the place he'd have to pass through. He cracked his window, letting the icy night air strike his face, hoping to numb that raw, pulsing nervousness at his temples. "Braddy, man," he said hesitantly, "do you know of any other way to Rockston without passing the Junction?"

Braddy's dark face frowned with thought. "No Carlin, I don't think—"

"Thanks." *what did you do Carlin what did you do—*

Don't think about it. Let it rest. Carlin's apprehension suddenly passed like the shadow of a cloud on a grain field, then vanished. He rolled his window up, and pressing his foot down harder, watched the speedometer lean to eighty. He glanced at Braddy in the corner of the seat, saw his large hands silently wrestling each other in his lap.

"Relax, Braddy," he ordered. "You're gonna have a real good time tonight. I'm gonna introduce you to some pretty wild chicks, so be ready—"

"I don't know," Braddy said. His eyes were tight and nervous. "I don't seem to have it like you."

Carlin chuckled. "It's all in your head. Remember that; everything bad is all in your head. Just watch me tonight, pick up a few moves, and pretty soon, we'll be running a monopoly on all the chicks from Blake to Rockston!"

"All right!" Braddy yelled, and clapped.

They had their moments, these times, when Carlin's gift of practical knowledge to Braddy actually amused the giver instead of aggravating him. He realized that it wasn't all Braddy's fault; his parents were too protective and Blake was a damned isolated place anyway. Braddy was eighteen, his own age, but as yet, hadn't learned the smooth, deceptive charm that had led to his own easy conquest of so many high school girls. Braddy's father was a weakling, working the town's general store and bakery, and came home every night to be worked on some more by Braddy's thin, shrewish mother.

Carlin knew why Braddy was behind like he was; so why shouldn't he help the kid out? But also, the act was selfish; Carlin was trying to appease his conscience,

because he felt guilty about some things he'd done. He vowed to improve his behavior, since somebody had seen fit to give him a second chance.

Suddenly he saw the tall, wooden sign that said "Junction" whiz by, and it took him a moment to recognize it, and what it meant. They were on the Junction now, the dark Highway 32. *Here, one year ago tonight.*

"Will there be lots of girls there, Carlin?" Braddy asked.

Grateful for the interruption into his thoughts, Carlin could only nod. Then he said, "Look, man. The girls won't bite. You can't be afraid of them. It's all in the approach. Hell, you can't come running up on a strange dog and expect it not to bark at you, right?" Braddy nodded.

Silence awhile, as Braddy retreated, staring from his window at the blackness outside. Carlin's thoughts drifted to the party, his eyes not seeing the road ahead. He could feel the heat, smell the wine on the breath of the girls who would dance too close to him, their cheap perfumes, the feel of their chintzy blouses. . .

"Look!" Braddy said. He shot forward on his seat. Pointed out the windshield.

"What?" Carlin snapped, startled.

"The moon, Carlin. Look at the moon." There was a child-like awe in his voice, like he'd uncovered the train set on Christmas morning he'd wanted all year. "Isn't it pretty?"

Carlin sighed, studying the blur of white road lines that swept under the car. If Braddy could learn to appreciate women like he seemed to appreciate everything from jazz to desert lilies, he'd probably have a harem by now.

But the moon *was* unusually beautiful this night along the Junction, and when Carlin finally did look up at it, it held his attention longer than a moment. A pale, ivory globe, it was a perfect round jewel, suspended in the black vacuum of the sky. It was an iris, seeing, staring, covering the surrounding desert with an eerie, pastel glow.

It was then he saw the girl standing along the roadside, her arms folded, her thin dress flowing, and Carlin screeched the Torino to a stop. She might need help or something, out here alone. It would be good for him to stop, ask what's wrong, did she need a lift.

Carlin knew the lecher in him was also aroused; maybe she would go to the party with them, and afterwards. . .

He backed the car up, and, as they stopped by the girl, Carlin rolled down his window.

"What are you doing!" Braddy cried, his incredulous eyes open wide.

The icy air hit his face as Carlin said, "Awful lonely for a pretty thing like you to be out here. Need a ride somewhere?" She answered him only with a small, wan smile, standing still.

"Aren't you cold?" Carlin asked, frowning. The girl nodded twice. Braddy was staring at Carlin. "You heard the lady, man," Carlin snapped. "She's cold. Hop in the back and let her in."

Braddy didn't move. "Carlin, are you all right?"

Carlin's eyes narrowed. "Go on," he muttered. "Get in the back seat." Braddy fumbled with the door before it opened, and he stepped out, shaking his head. He pushed the seat forward and climbed into the back, while Carlin gazed from the front window at the black vacuum of sky and road connecting at the horizon, waiting to inspect the girl's face when she sat beside him.

But she was already in the car, in the *back* seat, and the door still hung open like an expectant mouth. Carlin turned to stare at her, not quite believing her nerve.

She looked frail, surrounded by her thin, white full dress. Framed by black wild hair, her dark, diamond-shaped face was pretty, set with a pair of large obsidian-dark eyes, a small, undefined nose, and thin, well-formed lips. She wore no makeup, no jewelry. She looked about seventeen, and probably lived in one of the few shacks they'd already passed along the Junction.

It was an iris, staring, seeing, covering the desert with an eerie, pastel glow.

To Carlin's increasing discomfort, she continued to return his stare, and with only the slightest curve of a smile on her lips.

Finally, Carlin turned back around facing front, leaned across the seat, and pulled the door closed. From the corner of his eye he saw the girl reach out and lock it. The Torino sped away from the road's edge. Carlin pushed it back up to eighty-five as he tried to find his voice. "So, ah, where're you headed?" he asked finally.

"With you," the girl said, and her voice was not as pretty as he would have thought.

"Well, Braddy," Carlin said, "we've got company."

"Whatever you say, Carlin," Braddy said, and laughed uncertainly.

"Company," the girl repeated, and Carlin was sure it was a mockery. "Do you come this way often?" she asked him.

"Not really."

"Maybe once a year?" the girl asked. This time she was smiling, and the rows of her teeth showed. Carlin cleared his throat, watching the road.

"Maybe," he said. "What were you doing out here tonight anyway?"

A slight pause, then her cool voice floated up to him. "Waiting. . .do you always drive this fast, Carlin?"

He swallowed, eyes darting to the speedometer. *Ninety.* He'd been doing about ninety then, then. . .

"Going pretty fast, aren't you, Carlin?" Braddy suggested. Carlin shot him a glare in the mirror, and Braddy quickly amended his remark. "Well, I guess you can drive pretty much the way you want out here—"

"You can do almost *anything* out here, and get away with it," the girl said. "Isn't that right, Carlin?"

The car suddenly veered to the right, and the front tire dipped off the road into the shoulder. Swearing, Carlin struggled with the wheel to set the Torino straight, as the sweat now popped and streamed down his face. His eyes flew to the rearview mirror—*just your imagination man just a crazy coincidental phrasing of words. . .*

"Carlin, what's wrong!" Braddy was up in his seat, craning his neck to look in the front. "You okay?"

"Yeah," Carlin answered, gripping the steering wheel. And he heard the girl saying, "anyone lived in a pretty how town, with up so floating many bells down." She laughed softly. "One day anyone died I guess."

"Hey Carl, how long till we get to this party?" Braddy asked, his voice cutting through the fear clouding in Carlin's head.

"I-I don't know man," Carlin stammered. His foot pressed harder, and the Torino sped to one-hundred. *She knows!*

Just your imagination man
just a crazy
coincidental phrasing
of words. . .

"Carlin," she called, "are you a nice person?"

"Sure I am," he answered, too quickly.

"Are you?" she asked, and her whisper was like the hollow sound of a dead snakeskin in the wind. Carlin then saw the sign "Rockston: 15 mi." off to the road's right shoulder. My God, it was coming. Coming at one-hundred and ten down the Junction, coming, the place where a year ago it had happened, that night he'd been slightly drunk, not looking at the blur of the white lines on the black asphalt in the Torino's path, not seen. . .

what did you do Carlin what did you do—

"Tell me," the girl said, and Carlin's large, strained eyes fought the pull of her cold, smiling face in the rearview mirror. Braddy caught his breath then: "Carlin, we are going kind of fast, even on the desert. . ."

Carlin's tongue was locked in his throat, and he didn't turn to acknowledge the comment. The girl leaned up to the back of Carlin's head, and he felt her cold breath on his neck. "Carlin, Braddy doesn't know about what you did back there."

"What are you talking about?" Carlin managed to ask, his jaws trembling and his eyes bulging.

"What am I talking about?" Braddy asked, confused.

"It's important," the girl said, "real important. I'm not just anyone, you know, not anyone in a pretty how town. *Tell him. . .*"

"I'm not just anyone,"
she said. "Not anyone
in a pretty how town."
Tell him. . .

Images of that night along the Junction a year ago flew back at him this night: the dull thud of the Torino against the body, smashing it and catapulting it up, onto the windshield, where it rolled on the stomach, the white dress waving, the face, *her* face, was pressed against the window, eyes wide, mouth snarling, then she was gone, a white crumpled mound left behind on the dark of the desert highway.

"You know what I did?" Carlin heard himself slowly say.

"No, Carlin," Braddy said, concerned. "Tell me."

The girl was laughing now, a light empty sound, and the sweat drenched Carlin's face. "Tell him," she whispered, "tell what you did. Your secret, right Carlin? Brave guys hold secrets, brave guys die with them, right?"

Then he felt her fingers lightly stroke his neck. He shuddered. "No!"

"And one day anyone died, I guess," she said.

"Nooo!" Carlin yelled, his arms tensing like two rods on the wheel.

"Tell him Carlin, tell tell tell tell—"

"Carlin!" Braddy shouted, "for God's sake what's wrong with you? SLOW DOWN!"

Then suddenly it came, flowing like sugar between his fingers. Carlin said: "I hit her, Braddy, on this highway. I never stopped, never told anyone—" He looked at Braddy's wide eyes in the mirror. "It was an accident!" he screamed. "I was so scared, so scared. Nobody in town would have believed me, that I hadn't meant to do it—you know what they all think of me—that I'm no good, lazy"—his breath came in gasps—"I didn't go back to see about her because I thought she was dead—"

And then he allowed his eyes wildly, just once, to stray to her reflection in the mirror, and that's when the smell of blood hit him, and he saw her face, or what was left of one. The bared, hanging flesh, the smouldering dark eyesockets, and that jaw, open and shut, open and shut. And laughing—

"You did kill me, Carlin," it said, "I am dead." And

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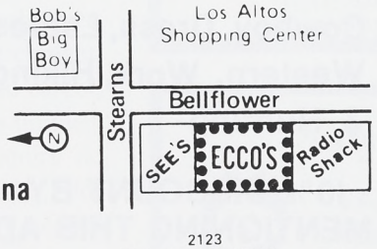

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the Torino danced crazily on the road, swerving, and swung speeding into the embankment, into the sand where it tumbled over and over and upright again, then remained dark and quiet.

''Carlin,'' a voice said urgently. ''Carlin!''

Moving, colors, brightness. Why was it so bright? Carlin slowly opened his eyes, staring up at the ceiling of the car from his crumpled position on the front seat. He coughed, tasting dried blood on his tongue. ''Are you all right?'' Braddy was shaking him, looking at him, and Carlin saw that his cheek was purple and that a small cut lay over his left eyebrow. ''We've been unconscious since last night,'' Braddy explained. ''You—drove off the road.''

''Yeah, yeah.'' Carlin tried to clear his mind, tried to make sense of the brightness of the desert sky, trying to . . .remember.

He bolted upright in his seat, ignoring the sharp pain it brought to his shoulder, his head. ''Where is she!'' he demanded.

Braddy studied him with a remote, almost sophisticated stare. ''Who?''

Carlin's head shot around. Backseat, outside. Nothing but hot, white sand. ''The girl,'' he said impatiently. ''The girl. The one I picked up last night. Where is she?'' He stared at Braddy's blank eyes.

''My God, Carlin.''

''Braddy, what *happened* to her? What—''

''You went crazy or something, Carl. I don't know. Maybe you had something before you picked me up.'' He shook his head. ''We were on the Junction when suddenly you stopped, and told me to get in the back.''

Carlin's eyes began to bulge. ''And—'' he prompted.

''And,'' Braddy continued, reluctant, ''you started, well, talking. And I don't think it was to me—''

''Of *course* it wasn't—''

''Carlin.'' Braddy's voice was sharp. Carlin looked at him unwillingly. ''Carlin, did you really hit somebody out here last year? And not tell anyone about it?''

''Braddy,'' Carlin said, his lips struggling to form the words, ''you mean, you didn't see her?''

Braddy was saying, softly, sadly, ''You did, didn't you? You ran a girl over out here. Didn't you? That's what you said.''

''She was here,'' Carlin said, ''she came back.'' And lowering his head, he cried freely.

''You know,'' Braddy said, looking at his watch, ''that we'll have to do the right thing about this, don't you Carlin? You understand that we'll have to tell somebody in town, don't you? Carlin, Carlin?''

. . .women and men (both little and small) cared for anyone not at all. . .they sowed their isn't they reaped their same sun moon stars rain. . .one day anyone died i guess (and noone stooped to kiss his face). . .

Active Seniors

(Continued from page 23)

sion for writing religious poetry. She says that God has for the last fifty years inspired her to write these poems at night:

Why do I care and keep on sharing
The heavy load the world is bearing?
The love of God is in my soul
and I cannot my peace withhold.
That's why I care.
—January 18, 1981, four a.m.

Celia says she is happiest when making other people happy. She occasionally collects bottles and cans for recycling to aid needy families in her neighborhood. Aside from that and her church activities, she is largely housebound.

"It gets lonely in the house sometimes," she says softly. "It's as silent as a grave. I look down the street, there's no one. I just long for companionship. I don't like to be shut in like this."

After a reflective pause, Celia talks of her future, but with no specific goals for longevity. "I'm not thinking about 100 years. But I'll live just as long as I can help somebody, as long as I feel needed."

Celia shares this desire to be useful with all seniors. One's need to feel one is contributing to the good of society, one's *raison d'etre,* does not stop on retirement day, but continues, perhaps stronger than before.

Despite the vast amount of good work volunteered by the elderly, some still falsely believe that once one has retired, one drains, rather than contributes to, society; they assume that our economy will suffer as the elderly increase in numbers in the coming years. This thought is unfounded, however. Birren says that West Germany, with a much higher percentage of elderly than that of the U.S., remains strong monetarily while paying higher Social Security benefits than does our government. "It's nonsense to think that the presence of old people drains a nation's productivity," he says.

Several organizations, recognizing the special requirements of seniors, have lobbied strongly for positive legislation affecting the elderly. According to Dr. Ruth B. Weg in *New Directions in Health Care for the Later Years,* the major groups are the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the National Retired Teacher's Association (NRTA), the Gray Panthers, the National Institute of Senior Citizens, the International Senior Citizens, and the International Seniors Centers.

Ever-increasing in numbers, the elderly continue to gain influence. They have a strong voice in matters affecting the country's socio-economic structure, pension and retirement legislation, and election results. Birren says that retired people exercise their right to vote more than most other age groups. Given their growing community, he thinks that politicians will need to "show more sensitivity to the older voter."

So all in all, the outlook for seniors seems to be very promising. With more support groups and their decisions to be actively involved in community life, a satisfying future lies ahead. Whether they volunteer, return to school for self-enrichment, or even embark on a second career, they round out their lives as fulfilled, contented people. They require no secret formulas or miracles; for most, just knowing they are needed is incentive and reward enough.

And for those of us who have several years left before we even think of retirement, perhaps the words of Dorothy Fornia are the best advice: "If the experience and wisdom of that population is not used, it is a very great loss."

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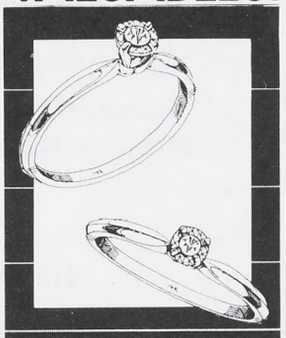

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Huntington Harbour

(Continued from page 7)

housing—which eliminated such usual amenities as sideyards, patios and landscaped entrances—received attention. New residents now pay two or three times more for their tiny condos than Yorath did for his five-bedroom house with its substantial yard.

Few unimproved parcels remain in Huntington Harbour, and they cost big bucks. ''We just listed a vacant lot at close to $650,000 and don't expect to have it on the market long,'' reveals Lezlie Greer of Huntington Harbour Realty.

The Harbour has only two types of housing: waterfront and near-water. They're priced accordingly. With the influx of custom building and varying amounts of space, there's no median price. ''The minimum for an average-sized waterfront residence is half a million dollars,'' observes Greer. Less than five years ago, the same home would have sold for only half that amount.

Only a small percentage of the buying public can afford a home in this price range, yet Huntington Harbour seems to foster an immunity to the real estate recession plaguing the Southland.

Devaluated dollars and record-high interest rates deter few prospective Harbourites. As one resident of Trinidad Island proudly boasts, ''They merely filter out the squeamish.''

''There are folks around here who would give all their limbs to get a stake in the action,'' chides Tom Yorath. This may be true figuratively, but no one remembers the last time a Ferrari occupied a ''Handicapped Only'' parking space at the Huntington Harbour Bay Club. In fact, close inspection reveals no such designation near that popular meeting place. It's as though the handicapped never happen by this way.

Personal Ads

(Continued from page 11)

Stirring his iced tea and fidgeting with the oversized glass, he admitted that he'd been nervous all day in anticipation. He wondered why I had placed the ad. I told him my usual lie—that I thought it would be a good way to selectively meet people—only this time I felt guilty lying. Being careful not to spin too large a web of lies, I considered the possibility of having to undo some of them later.

Jerry, a 26-year-old policeman, was shy. Silent pauses interrupted our conversation, but still I felt as if I was talking to an old friend. When he asked for my phone number, I had no reservations about giving it to him, as I had with Pete.

Getting up to leave I noticed that Jerry wore brand-new Sergio Valente jeans. They didn't cling to his body the way they do on singles-bar-regulars; in fact they bagged. He probably just liked the style of the jeans, or maybe he wanted to be cool. But it wasn't his style. Walking me to my car, he said he'd call.

Dear Jerry,

I have a confession to make. I ran my ad out of curiosity knowing that I was going to write about the people I met through the ad. Thoroughly expecting to meet a lot of lunatics, I surprisingly found that most of the men who answered were simply lonely. Loneliness is no crime.

Meeting a person as kind and considerate as you threw me off guard. I never expected it to happen. But I'm glad it did. I'm looking forward to seeing the Ice Capades with you this weekend.

Most sincerely,
A yng attr F who didn't seek sincere M but met one anyway.

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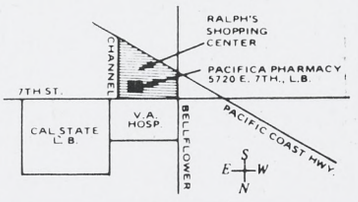

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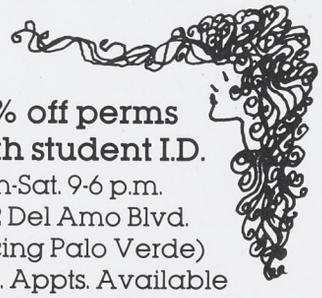

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The Gothic Passion

Escapist romances make a mint

By Teresa Philbin

Curled snugly in a favorite chair, they read for hours blissfully unaware as the roast burns, the work piles up, and the children wait to be picked up from school. When one sits deeply engrossed in the fifteenth and final chapter of the ongoing saga of Allegra Letitia Llewellyn and the Duke of Ravenhurststonesbrook, who's got time for life's bothersome details?

Such is the life of the gothic novel lover. A frivolous habit to the average devotee, they provide a kind of guilty treat you sneak when you know you have something better to do. None dare call them a necessity, but as a quick tonic when the brain-drain of everyday life gets to be too much, a good gothic novel brings ideal, undemanding entertainment.

Since before Byron's time, readers have spent money and time on flights of fictional fancy, held spellbound by every bizarre situation and unnatural relationship the desperate author could conjure up. But today's pulp romances (and their video-gothic monsterchild: the soap opera) are faint-hearted descendants of the Real Thing: the first gothic novels.

"The damsel-in-distress stories we now call 'modern gothics' aren't gothics at all," says novelist Elizabeth Peters. The first true gothics, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Ontranto* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* were rich with what Peters calls "an atmosphere of brooding, supernatural horror, and a setting which included ruined castles and desolate moors."

The eerie setting, at least, survives as a popular tool of the writer trying to bewitch her readers. Just check the covers of any dozen romances: a blonde in a diaphanous gown, night wind whipping her hair, runs across a gloomy moor from an unseen menace, presumably in hot pursuit. A lone candle shines from the window of a mansion on the cliff above.

Aside from the spooky castle, most of the characteristics of the early gothics have vanished. Today, what we label the 'modern gothic' (for want of a better title) generally features a virtuous young lady and her admirable beau, both radiating traditional American values. They fall in love and overcome all obstacles to be together.

One finds no deep moral statements or brilliant theme developments in gothics, since none are expected. Gothic fans gladly forego the joys of probable plots and literary credibility for 200-odd pages of tempestuous romance, exotic foreign climes, and fairy-tale conclusions.

With such a simple format, one might think that romantic fiction appeals only to a small group of head-in-the-clouds dreamers. After all, does anyone still believe in love at first sight or happily-ever-after endings? The answer is a deafening *yes.* With readers of Harlequin's High Priestess of Love, Barbara Cartland, alone numbering well over 100 million worldwide, with Silhouette Romances and Harlequin Enterprises churning out six and twelve novels each month respectively, and with the book-to-film adaptations of several novels currently in the works, it's obvious that the gothic's evolution from closet indulgence to major industry is complete.

Though the gothic publishers speak of this readership in terms of a "target audience," the 17 to 39-year-old age estimate doesn't ring true. Pinning down the typical gothic fan is like defining a football lover or a health-food faddist; it can't be done. Everyone from housewives to executives (many of them men), from preteens to Presidents, reads them. Cartland swears that Anwar Sadat loves her books!

Beyond a penchant for the romantic, about the only thing these millions of gothic gluttons have in common is a reluctance to own up to their habit. Curiously, few will admit that they read gothics. It comes down to intellectual snobbery, really: no one wants to broadcast the fact that the paperback in the *War and Peace* cover they're reading isn't Tolstoy at all, but the *Harlequin-of-the-month.*

In spite of this romance-reading boon's magnitude as the closet-vice of the bored, not everyone flips over gothics. Feminists hate them because they peddle the antiquated notion that a helpless, frail airhead must wait for the arrival of her handsome prince to solve all her problems. The academic community roundly scorns gothics as the mind-rot of the masses, suspected of causing the downfall of education and the rise of illiteracy. Still, for every arch-browed scholar who sees them as a bad joke

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with the literary value of a Cheez Whiz label, a dozen supporters of the genre passionately read on in secret.

What keeps an otherwise rational audience panting for more gothic novels? There are all kinds of possible reasons, but one thing is certainly true: people buy them for different reasons than they do the Best Sellers. For instance, gothics offer little violence (except for the occasional exchange of fisticuffs, and perhaps a duel or two). And certainly, readers don't frequent pulp romance sections searching for innovative story lines; no new ground in plot has been broken since Charlotte Bronte sent the first mad aunt lurking in the tower, and let that cheeky governess wed above her rank to become mistress of the manor. Now those eight or ten original plots are as weary and cobwebbed as the venerable mansions in which they take place.

This similarity in plots confuses at first. An uneasy moment comes to fledgling gothic converts, somewhere between *Dark Lord of Boroughstoune* and *Her Master's Passion* when they can't quite remember where one ended and the other took up. Take heart, their reasoning hasn't slipped yet. Most writers of gothics follow a formula; their products seem as alike as peas in a pod.

Once upon a time, a crafty publisher got wise to the fact that a certain combination of ingredients sold: an exquisite young heroine with a Fort Knox guard's ability to protect her virtue meets up with a dark, virile hunk with a past. Sparks fly, misunderstandings abound, and after a prescribed number of chapters pass, they reconcile and live happily ever after. Result: the book sells, the readers find escape, and the publisher and the author both grin all the way to the bank.

So there it is, the winning recipe. Gothics offer cheap, fun relief from the drudgeries and harshness of reality by taking our minds off our problems. When we read of a heroine faced with the impossible decision between marriage to the evil marquis and the job of governess to five odd children in their haunted home, our own lives appear to be a sea of tranquility in comparison.

Other reader needs fan the flaming gothic rage. Some readers like the adventure of armchair travel best. Others, according to Barbara Cartland, turn to them in a backlash against the overflow of explicit sex in other media; they appreciate the less-is-more policy of the gothics, which prefer to leave twilight trysts and the like to the imagination.

Those readers who like spicier romances can branch out to the bodice-rippers of Rosemary Rodgers and her ilk. There, the rules of romance go differently, but limitations still exist. As author Helen Rogan says, "...it is only permissible to write explicitly about sex if it is historical sex, and the more historical the subject, the sexier the book may be." Regardless, every gothic worth its salt satisfies fans with that all-encompassing kiss at its conclusion.

The dreamy world of gothics lets readers act out their unspoken whims and fantasies through fictitious people and places. Whether one's tastes run to swashbuckling pirates or ethereal noblewomen, a stack of gothics waits to suit any mood. For an hour or two of pleasant escape, all that is required is what Samuel Coleridge once dubbed "a willing suspension of disbelief."

So we continue to read on and on, hopelessly embroiled in the fantastic lives of paper characters, crying over their failures and sharing in their triumphs. As soon as the cover closes on one saga, we hasten to the bookstore, hats pulled low and shades in place, once more to plunk down a few dollars to find out what *really* happened up at the manor that dark and stormy night.

TO MARGARITAVILLE

Ensenada on a budget

By Bill Campa

Sadly, hosts of mobile Southern Californians never make it to Ensenada. Less than four hours away from Long Beach, this bustling Baja California seacoast town offers a variety of pleasant diversions at costs to suit a student budget. Among the options for weekend hedonists are excellent fishing, water skiing, off-road driving, camping, hiking, sunning, and, of course, shopping and eating.

People used to give the excuse that there weren't any decent roads in Baja California, and rightly so. But with the completion of the Transpeninsular Highway (Mexico Highway 1), that alibi is no longer valid.

Just sixty miles south of the border at Tijuana, Ensenada can be reached by two highways—the *libre* (free) or *cuota* (toll) roads. The libre road is a twisting and squirming path that hugs closely to the mountains and demands the driver's constant concentration. But the cuota, the Transpeninsular Highway, is newly-paved with a sprinkling of flowers on the shoulders, and the blue Pacific rolling to the right of south-bound traffic. Well-placed off-ramps allow shutterbugs to take the mandatory snapshots of the surf lazily plowing shoreward in long streamers of white froth or crashing against rough rocky cliffs.

The main tourist strip in downtown Ensenada is called Avenida Primera in places, Avenida Adofo Lopez Mateos in others. The better hotels and curio shops line this avenue, whose raucous nightlife comes alive in late spring and summer. Street traffic is hectic, with pedestrians dashing between cars and drivers all but ignoring signals.

Turn a corner from Avenida Primera and you will find a different Ensenada. The locals shop here, leaving "main street" to the tourists. Here in the off-streets are found the *panaderias*— bakery shops where a few pesos buy delicious *pan Mexicano:* Mexican sweet-breads. Here the street-cart vendors sell clam and shrimp cocktails to the natives, as well as *agua de limon*—fresh lemonade.

One of the more famous (or infamous) side-street establishments is Hussong's Bar, established in 1892, the source of all the Hussong's T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, and bumper stickers in Southern California. What is the attraction? Admittedly, from the outside, Hussong's has all the appeal of a skid-row dive. Ah, but inside is a different story.

Hussong's lets visitors revel in the charming decadence of ancient Babylon just one more time. Even early in the afternoon, the bar may be standing room only, filled with terry-clothed and sunburned *gringos y gringas.* This is a tourist's bar, where complete strangers can meet, and later become the best of friends.

Entering the bar, you'll notice the armed guard near the door, a short fellow with closely-cropped hair and a pencil-thin mustache, who probably won't be smiling. Pencil sketches and business cards cover the four walls, and a stuffed moose head peers out over the patrons. A small band plays ranchero music, as wool blanket peddlers snake their way toward potential customers. A man shuffles from one table to another, pointing to a contraption around his creased neck. Battery-like, the machine sends a mild electrical current through the arm of one inebriated tourist, making his arm go into spasms. The man gives a toothless grin.

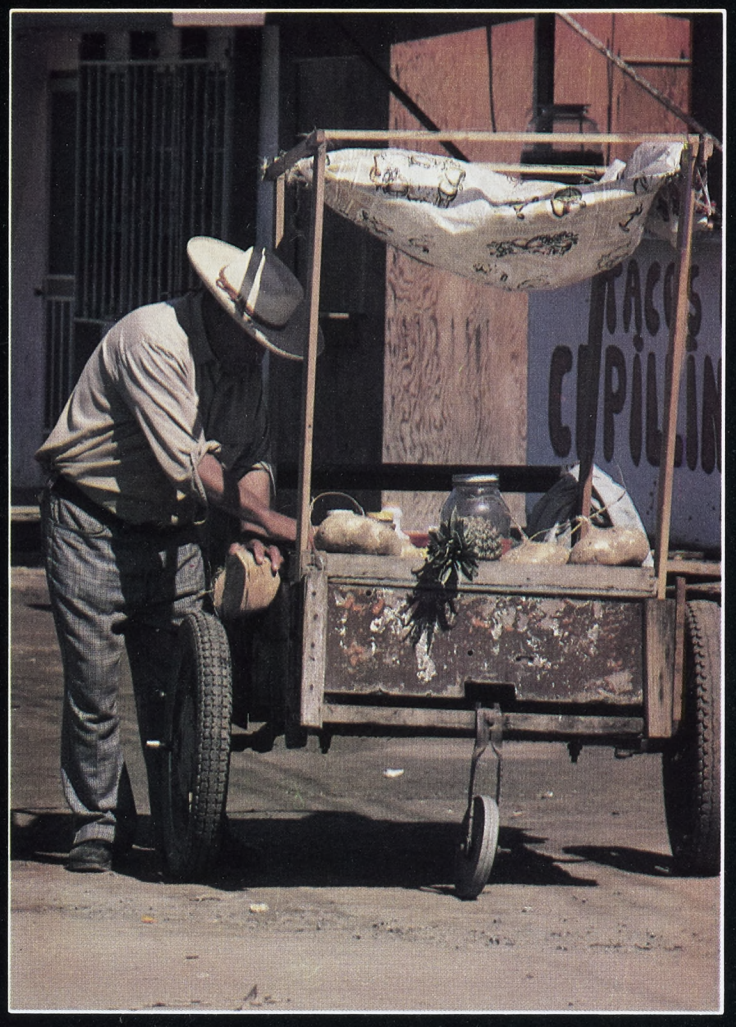
It is said that in Hussong's, there are only two expressions you need to know: *"Mas, por favor,"* and *"Necesito abogado."* Translation: "More, please," and "I need a lawyer."

If the trip down Baja is made on a small budget, consider using the many area campgrounds. Facilities range from small, off-road parks with outhouses to the Estero Beach Resort, with tennis, horseback riding, gift shops and a recreation hall. The road to Punta Banda is packed with campgrounds that cost only a couple of dollars a night, such as La Jolla and Villareno. Some camps have permanently secured trailers, which can cost as little as six dollars for the night.

If you should decide to stay in one of Ensenada's nicer hotels, try to make reservations, if possible, since vacancies are few during the tourist season. If you cannot make reservations before the trip, try and find a room as soon as you arrive in the city, preferably in the morning. A few of the recommended downtown hotels are El Cid, Travelodge, San Nicolas, Bahia, Villa Marina, and the Cortez. If you want to escape the

Photographs by Joan Monroe

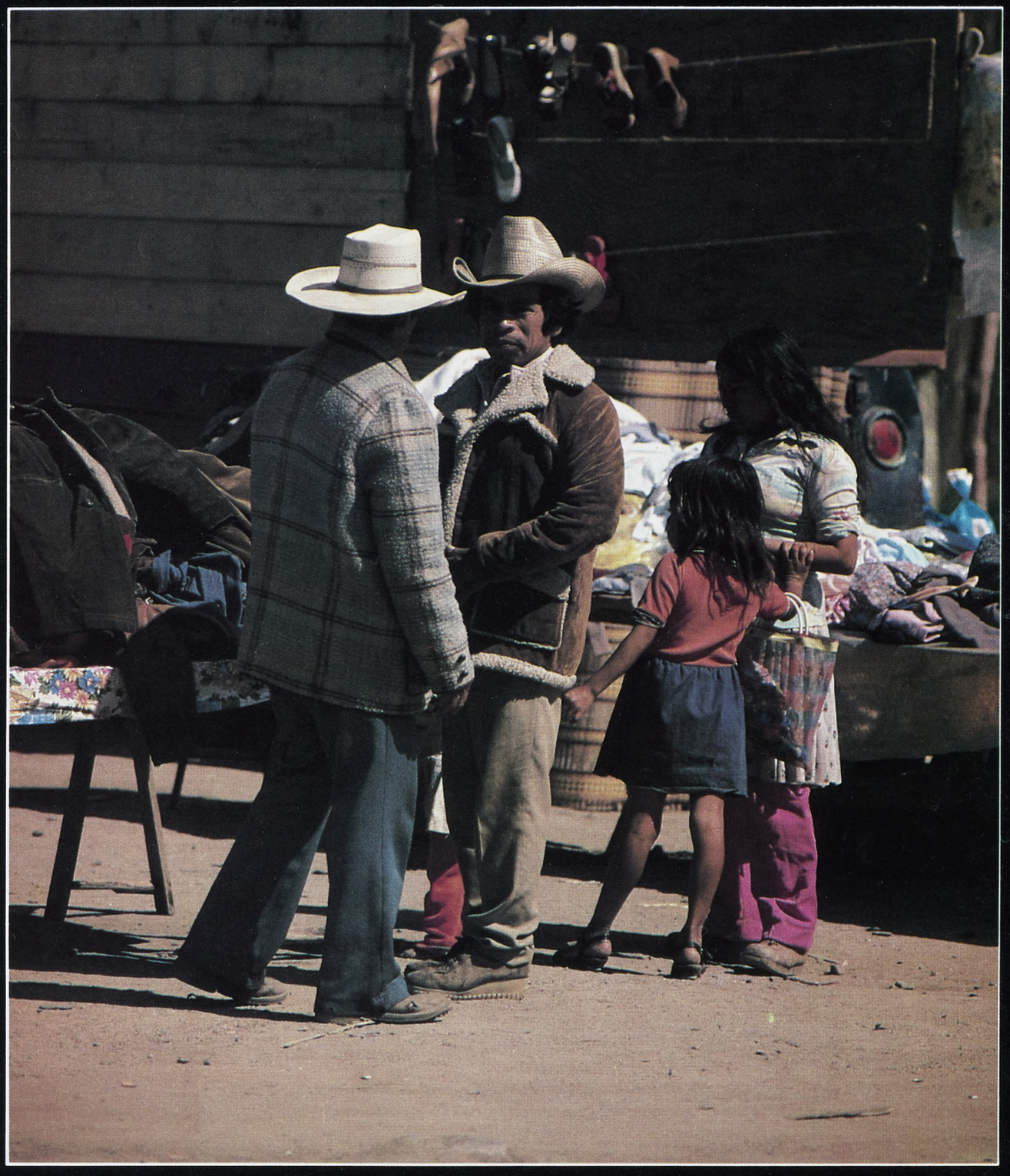
Sculptured by wind and surf into fairytale shapes, these rocks off the coast of Punta Banda retain their original bronze sea-polish. The seagulls have not yet turned them snowy white with guano.



With a cloth overhead for shade, this street vendor chops jicama—a turnip-like vegetable—on the cart he made from junkyard odds and ends. Other vendors also sell a variety of foods—fruit, hot dogs, ice cream, tamales, tacos and juices.

South of Ensenada, pickers sort American-bound Brussels sprouts. Many crops are grown almost exclusively for U.S. distribution. With an unemployment rate topping forty percent, workers welcome even this back-breaking labor.

Photos by Joan Monroe



A customer barters with a *varillero*, or peddler, who sells clothes, shoes and housewares from village to village. The government subsidizes some varilleros, especially those who travel to the hard-to-reach mountain communities.

Research expenses for this article were provided by a grant from Reader's Digest Magazine

noisy city, try the Estero Beach Hotel, about nine miles south of Ensenada, on the beach. It offers a simple and peaceful calm the downtown hotels cannot.

While shopping downtown, consider buying a pair of *huaraches,* or Mexican sandals. No shoe store north of the border makes as tough a sandal as those in Mexico. Other good values are any leather goods, blankets, pottery and baskets, and onyx chessboards.

Ensenada provides good times, with few hitches, if you plan well. Here are some suggestions to make the trip down Baja go smoothly:

1. When reaching the border, be sure to buy car insurance. American insurance policies are invalid in Mexico, where a separate policy should be purchased. You can be put in jail if you cannot provide an acceptable policy, pending an investigation. Comprehensive auto insurance is cheap (about seven dollars for a weekend), and agencies can be found in San Diego and San Ysidro as well as Tijuana.
2. Get a tourist card if you plan to go past Maneadero, or plan to stay more than 72 hours in Baja. To provide identification, bring a copy of your birth certificate, a military service card, a passport, or a notarized affidavit of citizenship. The tourist cards are free, from Mexican insurance agencies near the border, or at Maneadero.
3. Bottled water is a must. It may be a cliche, but do not drink the tap water or Montezuma may get his revenge. Grocery stores in major cities usually have bottled water, should you run out. Better yet, quaff down one of the fine Mexican beers, which include Bohemia, Corona, Dos Equis, and Tecate.
4. Tourists can do many incredibly stupid things in Baja, and the worst is trying to smuggle dope. Some Americans may incorrectly think that Baja police feel the same way about marijuana as do some California authorities. The unfortunate find out that isn't so. Even with a small amount of pot, jail terms can run from six months to three years—after the courts finally get around to sentencing offenders. According to a U.S. consul aide in Tijuana, all the U.S. Government can do for Americans caught smuggling is provide a list of attorneys who might defend them. Pot, no matter how good, isn't worth the risk.
5. Do not drive at night! On California freeways, a stray cat or dog is bad enough, but on Baja roads, there are stray cows and horses to deal with. Many accidents occur on the undeveloped road shoulders, and little crosses and shrines dot the side of the highway, serving as reminders of past tragedies.
6. If your car breaks down on the highway, chances are the Green Angels, a government-sponsored service, will help you out. Driving in green pick-up trucks, they cover roads at least twice a day and provide emergency service for the stalled vehicle. They even sell certain spare parts at cost, and can supply water, gasoline, and oil.
7. Mexican gasoline companies are nationalized, and accept no credit cards. PEMEX gasoline comes in three grades: EXTRA, NOVA, and diesel. According to Tijuana's Office of Tourism, PEMEX EXTRA costs seven pesos a liter (about 29 cents), or $1.10 a gallon, with a 92-octane rating. The regular fuel, NOVA, comes at 3.2 (13 cents) a liter, but is only 81 octane and is almost guaranteed to make any late-model car knock and ping. The fuel bargain in Mexico is diesel, which is only a peso a liter, or 15 cents a gallon! Try to keep your tank half-full whenever possible, and top off every time you stop for gas.
8. As soon as you arrive in Mexico, go to a bank and exchange some of your American dollars for pesos. Many booths in the city will also change money, but for a small charge on each dollar. Most establishments in busier Baja areas accept dollars, but some do not, especially in smaller towns. Whenever you make a purchase, try to receive change in the same currency; if you don't, you will lose money with each change. A mini-calculator helps figure the conversion rates from dollars to pesos, as well as miles to kilometers.

If your Spanish is weak, don't worry; most businesses dealing with tourists have someone who speaks English. It's still a good idea to bring along a Spanish phrase book, though.

Enjoy Ensenada with a couple of good maps and a good attitude; it can be one of the best vacation values around, if you want it to be.

Important Numbers

You won't want to use these, but will need them in case of an emergency. The State Attorney General's Office for the Protection of Tourists in Baja California has been specifically set up to aid travelers with problems ranging from being cheated at a curio shop to needing legal aid. This agency also acts as an information clearinghouse for the tourist seeking specific people who can help with difficulties.

In Tijuana, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., call 3-1655. There is also a 24-hour hotline: ask for agent 4621 at 5-0302.

Ensenada: from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., call 4-0142. The after-hours hotline is 8-2201, from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Ask for agent 5124.

The American Consulate in Tijuana can be reached at 6-1001-05, or 6303-06, from 8:00 a.m. to noon, and from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. The 24-hour hotline is 5-0301, ask for agent 4434.

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